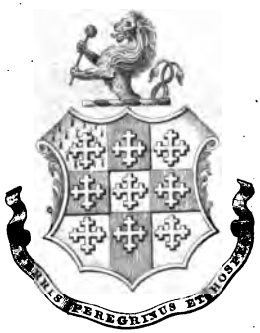

James Bennett Esq.

MEMOIRS

OF

LADY WOODFORD.

VOL. I.

MEMOIRS

OF

LADY WOODFORD.

WRITTEN BY HERSELF,

AND ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

Printed by GEORGE BIGG,

For F. and J. NOBLE, at their respective Circulating Libraries, near Middle-Row, Holborn, and St. Martin's-Court, near Leicester-Square.

MDCCLXXI.

MEMOIRS

OF

LADY WOODFORD.

IN consequence of being repeatedly rallied by you, for not giving you some account of the former part of my life, according to promise, I now sit down to be my own historian; and I sit down to write my narrative with pleasure, because I believe that you will find amusement in it. If you are acquainted with any girls in circumstances similar to mine, the perusal of it may, perhaps, afford *them* instruction.

At a very early age was I treated by my mother with a harshness and a neglect which hurt me exceedingly: she never

fondled me, ſhe hardly took any notice of me.—I was but too ſenſible of the unkind treatment I received of her, and fancying that ſomething was wanting in my carriage, I endeavoured, by many little aſſiduities to attract her attention. —They ſeldom, indeed, proved ſucceſsful; yet I perſevered, and ſtrove more than ever, by a number of infantine ways, which I thought would be winning, to make her behaviour affectionately maternal.

One day, when I had laid my head in her lap with a childiſh fondneſs, ſhe ſtroked back my hair which, having been neglected, grew quite over my face, and ſaid; "Look up Fanny—why, you have good eyes, child."

She then examined my hands and arms, and kiſſed me; and from that hour began to take (apparently at leaſt) ſome

ſatisfaction

ſatisfaction at the ſight of me. I was, at that time, juſt entered into my eleventh year, but I had only learnt a little common plain-work and reading, at a petty day-ſchool, in which indeed, I took particular pains to pleaſe, becauſe I was ambitious of being diſtinguiſhed by my miſtreſs, imagining that *her* regard was better than nobodys; but I chiefly wiſhed to be carreſſed by my mother; and I actually envied ſeveral of my ſchool-fellows on finding that they were favourites at home.—My wiſh was at laſt accompliſhed; very ſoon afterwards my mother ſent me to a better ſchool; I learnt French and dancing, and as my leſſons were quite agreeable to me, I appeared to advantage in the performance of them.—My mother came to ſee me dance at a ball given by our maſter; upon that occaſion I had new clothes

and finer ones than ever; and I acquitted myself, tho' not till I had felt many awkward sensations, entirely to the satisfaction of my mother and my master.—The latter, indeed, paid more attention to me than I thought was necessary: I was too young, it is true, to understand his meaning, but I was old enough to know that his behaviour was very particular, and it was, certainly, very disagreeable.—My mother, also, observed it, and, by the questions which she asked, made me acquainted with things of which I had till then no idea. I was removed to another school, at which I staid but a little while, for, before I was fourteen, my mother agreed with masters to teach me at home, and I seldom stirred without her. I was very much confined, yet I did not feel my confinement intolerable, as I had a great number of amusing books

both

both in French and English, which with my needle and my musick (I was greatly delighted with the latter) filled up my time in a manner that pleas'd me extremely.—I learnt, also, to draw, and to paint in water-colours. The entertainment which I received from my various occupations, was only interrupted by the tiresome injunctions of my mother, with regard to my person: she would never suffer me to stand in the sun: I was obliged to wear gloves always, even when the weather was remarkably hot: my hair was frequently dressed, and my teeth put under the direction of a dentist: all that trouble about me, I thought, was thrown away, as I was not often seen by any body; for, young and ignorant as I was, I soon began to perceive I was dressed in order to be admired, tho' I was principally

admired by my mother, who frequently made me dreſs myſelf according to her fancy. After having ſurveyed me, for about half an hour at a time, ſhe gave me a nod of approbation, and then ordered me to pull of my ornaments, and bury myſelf in my large cap, handkerchief, and gloves again.—She would alſo, frequently, aſk me queſtions about the books he had given me, and generally recommended thoſe which were moſt calculated to raiſe the tender paſſions: but of her recommendations I took more notice afterwards. She furniſhed me with many books which treated of love, yet ſhe carefully kept me from the ſight of any men, my maſters excepted; ſeldom however leaving me alone even with *them*.

One day being called away while my muſick maſter was teaching me a pathetic ſong, he ſeized the moment, and

availing

availing himſelf of her abſence, he began to preſs my hands very warmly, in order, I imagined, to make me feel the beauties of the compoſition; his efforts had little ſucceſs, for he excited no emotions in me but emotions of diſguſt; and the indifference, or rather contempt, with which I beheld him, while I haſtily ſnatched away my hand juſt when my mother reentered the room, ſeemed to give her no ſmall delight. She only took notice, however, of my behaviour to him, by interrogating me about *his* carriage, and never left us together afterwards.

Much in this manner did I ſpend my time, till I was between fifteen and ſixteen.

While I was ſitting one morning in my dreſſing-room, during my mother's abſence from home, from the windows of which I could ſee nothing but our own

little garden, and colouring ſome flowers upon vellum, the maid called to me, and begged me to come into the dining-room, as there was a great quarrel in the ſtreet, and as ſhe was afraid that a poor young gentleman would be murdered.

From the girl's account of the affair, I thought I ſhould be very much ſhocked by going into the dining-room, her repeated intreaties however, added to a curioſity natural in young people, brought me, almoſt inſenſibly, to the window.—I then ſaw a very genteel and handſome young man, endeavouring to defend himſelf againſt two or three ill-looking fellows, who wanted to lay violent hands upon him.—The mob took his part: ſome of them drove his adverſaries away, the reſt forced him towards our door, which Sally, running down, had opened, in ſpite of all I could ſay to prevent

vent her committing so indiscreet an action.

The young gentleman accordingly came in. Sally then shut the door upon the croud, and before I could tell how things had been managed below, *he* entered the dressing-room, to which I had retired, through fear; but the same fear had hindered me from making myself private. I stood, therefore, rooted to the floor with astonishment; when he made his appearance, without his hat, and with his hair in the greatest disorder:—his hair, disordered as it was, seemed to be very fine; it was of a beautiful chesnut colour: his clothes and linnen were torn, yet there was a charming symmetry in his features, and a gracefulness in his air and manner, which rendered all the above-mentioned little disadvantages too trifling to be regarded.

I was certainly ſtruck at the appearance he made, after having been ſo rudely treated by his enemies, and he looked equally ſurprized, if not more at the ſight of me.—He ſtarted immediately, on ſetting his foot in the room, ſurveyed me a moment with the greateſt attention, and then, advancing to me in the moſt reſpectful manner, begged my pardon in the politeſt terms, for the liberty he had taken in forcing himſelf into my apartment for ſhelter: but, at the ſame time, with very inſinuating accents, earneſtly deſired me to permit him to give me an account of the affair which had occaſioned his intruſion, hoping that his narrative would in ſome meaſure apologize for his behaviour.

As to myſelf, I was ſilent and abaſhed: I was very ſenſible that his admiſſion into the houſe was imprudent, and that

tho'

tho' I had not immediately encouraged it, I had done nothing to oppose it; yet I could not help feeling emotions in the young stranger's favour: I was silent and confounded—He accordingly, seeing that I made no attempt to lay restraint upon his tongue, began to open his defence.—"Having been rather too free with my last quarers allowance," said he, "I had only fifty guineas left, which were to have been paid to the persons who sent home some furniture for my apartments, but on meeting with a family in great distress, I could not refrain from assisting them, hoping that those to whom I was indebted would wait a little, when they were acquainted with the cause of my delay: but I was mistaken: for tho' I described, as feelingly as I could, the distresses of those whom I had relieved, the flinty-hearted tradesmen

men declared they would ſtay no longer for their money; in conſequence therefore, of *their* reſolutions, bailiffs were employed to arreſt me. The inhumanity of ſuch a proceeding rouzed my anger, I confeſs, and urged me to endeavour to baffle their deſigns, at leaſt, againſt me. Luckily, the mob, believing that I had juſtice on my ſide, ſupported me, and ſpurred me to ſeek an aſylum in this houſe, as the door ſtood invitingly open. I ſeized that moment to diſengage myſelf from my enemies, but I ſhall never forgive myſelf for having given you, madam, ſo much diſturbance."

I know not what anſwer I returned: I was ready to ſink with ſhame. I was extremely confuſed: I was, alſo, prodigouſly alarmed, tho' I could not tell why I was ſo alarmed. I had no reaſon,

in-

indeed, to believe that my mother would be pleaſed with the admittance of a young ſtranger into the houſe during her abſence, yet I was not conſcious of having invited him, nor of having given him any encouragement to come into it, tho' I certainly ſhould have freely encouraged him to make it an aſylum, had I been miſtreſs of it: being naturally inclined to pity any human creature unfortunately ſituated.—I ſhould then have been only reſtrained by apprehenſions with regard to the tumultuous behaviour of the mob, till I had received information about the motives.

The young ſtranger, perceiving me exceedingly embarraſſed, and incapable of replying to what he had communicated, concerning himſelf, approached, very reſpectfully, the table on which

the

the vellum-drawing lay, which I had began to colour.—"May I presume madam," said he, "to look at your performance?"

I made no answer, but, following him, took up the drawing and presented it to him in the best manner I could.

He took it from me, with a genteel air, expressed no small surprize and pleasure at the sight of a picture so judiciously and beautifully executed—(I use his own words) and with a look full of admiration, asked me if I acquitted myself in every thing I undertook in the same masterly way.

I blushed at his praises: I thought them too extravagant. I felt myself undeserving of them, yet they gave me a satisfaction which I never felt before: a satisfaction which I could not express.

"Do you still learn to paint, madam?"

"I do not learn at this time Sir," replied

"I; the

"I; the person who taught me left England about a month ago, in order to reside in Italy."

He then took out his watch, shook his head, and with a sigh, asked me if I would permit him to wait on me sometimes, to pay his grateful acknowledgements for the shelter I had afforded him.

I answered that I had never any visitors unknown to my mother, and that as she was not at home I could say nothing to his request.

"Only say," replied he, with a very particular expression in his eyes and voice, "that my seeing you now and then, will not be disagreeable to yourself, and I will be contented at present."

He took my hand while he spoke those words, and by so doing threw me into a second embarrassment, but an embarrassment much more pleasing

than

than the first was.—For some moments I had no answer ready for him; during my hesitation he kept his eyes fixed on me, and pressed my hand to his bosom.

To deliver myself, at length, from importunities which began to make me very awkwardly uneasy, I told him, that as I had never seen him before, I was not able to return an answer to his question.—"It is almost impossible, Sir," added I, "for people, on so short an acquaintance, to know whether they are agreeable to each other or not."

"I am sorry," said he, with another sigh, "that I have not been so fortunate as to make an impression upon *you*, deep as that which you have made on me, with your charming person, fine accomplishments, and amiable manners: however, if you will but say that you discern nothing in me to create disgust, I will hope

hope that, upon a nearer acquaintance, my efforts to please may be *not disagreeable*, at least, to you."

He then, before I was aware of his design, raised my hand to his lips, and kissed it,

As soon as he had quitted the room, my first wish was to call him back; my heart, already too partial in his favour, accused me of a failure in point of hospitality: but the fear of being thought too forward, hindered me from acting agreeably to the innocent impulses of my inclination.—I ran to the window to see if those who had attempted to detain him had withdrawn themselves, and felt as if I had discovered both ill-nature and ill-breeding by not having asked him to stay till I was sure his pursuers were quite gone.

The crowd was dispersed, but I waited,

in

in vain, to ſee *him* who, I ſoon found, engroſſed my thoughts.—I remained at the window till my eyes were fatigued with looking at the various objects in the ſtreet, and then called Sally, who gave me an opportunity to be very inquiſitive, by telling me that the gentleman had eſcaped from one of the kitchin windows which opened into the *court*, as he believed that he ſhould, by ſo leaving the houſe, elude the ſearch of thoſe who might be watching for him.

I was pleaſed to hear that he had taken ſo much care of himſelf, tho' I was ſtill uneaſy, becauſe I had not thought of detaining him till he might get away ſafely, but, upon my diſcloſing my ſentiments about this ſubject to Sally, ſhe told me, that I had more reaſon to be ſatisfied with his departure than diſcontented about it.—"Tis better as it is, Madam,"

Madam," added ſhe; "if my miſtreſs had come home ſhe might have been very angry, and we ſhall have the gentleman here again I'll lay my life."

I did not, I confeſs, thoroughly, comprehend her meaning, but I felt a ſecret pleaſure arifing from what ſhe had uttered.

In this ſtate was I when my mother came home; rather loſt in reflections upon what had juſt paſſed.

As ſoon as I could recover myſelf a little, I told my mother what had happened: I did not, indeed, acquaint her with every particular, I only informed her that a young gentleman ran into our houſe to get out of the hands of ſome ill-looking men in the ſtreet.—I related the ſimple fact faithfully; I ſhould have related, with the ſame fidelity, every incident which had happened during her

abſence.

absence.—Yet I presently found that the intelligence I had imparted to her was not, in *her* opinion, of a trifling nature, by the number of her interrogations, which I answered as well as I could; I made no false disclosures, but I did not dwell minutely upon every circumstance, as I do now for *your* amusement.—I was cautious—tho' I hardly knew at that time why I was so—I scorned to impose upon my mother, yet I thought it not at all necessary to load my narrative with the repetition of trivial circumstances.

The next day my mother scarce left me a moment—Sally, however, found an opportunity to slip a letter into my hand, unseen by *her*. I took it, but as I did not know her meaning, I asked her what it was.

" A let-

"A letter," replied ſhe, whiſpering; "read it in a moment before my miſtreſs comes in from the garden."

"Why this hurry?" ſaid I: "from whom did you receive it?" added I, with an air of indifference.

Irritated by that indifference, ſhe cried, "Lord help me, how can you ſtand aſking ſo many queſtions, when there is no time to loſe? your mother will be in before you can get half way through it."

"I can read it as well," replied I, "when ſhe is here, as when ſhe is abſent."

"But you muſt not," anſwered ſhe peeviſhly: "ſhe will be angry with you, and you will be ſorry, by and bye, to find that you have not read it by yourſelf."

Thus

Thus urged, I at last complied and opened my letter: it contained a declaration which was conveyed in very elegant, and very impassioned terms. I coloured as I read on, and my heart fluttered; yet I was not a little pleased, to find myself so tenderly addressed by a man, whom I thought, tho' I had seen him but once, extremely agreeable.

The artful Sally, more intelligent than I was, saw immediately the impression which the letter had made on me, and pressed me to answer it without delay: "That is," added she, "as soon as my mistress leaves you alone."

"And why may I not answer it when my mother is with me, supposing I am to answer it at all?"

"Lord bless me, Miss," cried she, "you are enough to make any body mad; why you know, as well as I, that my mistress will be angry with us all."

"It

"It would be wrong then, to anſwer it, Sally."

"Was ever any thing like you?" ſaid ſhe, haſtily: "there are a great many things which my miſtreſs does not approve of, and yet there is no harm in them—People think differently."

"Yes:—You and my mother may think differently; but it is better for my mother and me, perhaps, to think alike."

Sally now began to loſe all patience, eſpecially as ſhe heard my mother coming. With looks full of the greateſt diſcontent—"Well then Miſs, I beg, at leaſt, that you will not ſay any thing to my miſtreſs about the letter."

"Here then, take the letter," replied I, "holding it out to her."

You will be ſurprized, my dear friend, at my ſo eaſily parting with my letter, the

the first of the kind I had ever received, and in every respect sufficient to gratify my vanity: but not to make myself appear in a false light, I must honestly confess, that I really did not know in what manner to answer my lover's affectionate epistle, and that I really had a particular aversion to all kinds of deceit—I therefore gave it up, but I will sincerely own, that I more than once wished for a sight of it again, so very insinuating is flattery to a young mind.—However, tho' I really longed to read all the fine things which were written about me, all the well-turned-compliments to my person, to my manners, &c. &c. I had courage enough peremptorily to resist all Sally's persuasions; and at last to tell her, that if she spoke another word upon the subject, I would acquaint my mother with her impertinence.

To

To make myſelf amends, in ſome meaſure, for this little ſacrifice, I indulged myſelf in ſtealing many looks in the glaſs, to ſee if my little perſon any way deſerved the fine encomiums which had been ſo liberally beſtowed upon it: and, to ſay truth, I not only went away extremely well ſatisfied with it, but returned, ſeveral times, to it, to ſurvey my whole figure, becauſe I was partial enough to my own beauty, to believe that my lover had not in the leaſt flattered me.—Emotions, ſimilar to thoſe which I then felt, agitate the boſom of every girl, I fancy, when ſhe firſt finds herſelf admired; and you may aſk your own heart, Maria, if they are not natural.

When I had ſufficiently enjoyed the ſenſations ariſing from the ſurvey of my perſonal charms, I reflected upon my ingenuity in tracing and colouring thoſe

flowers which my admirer had so highly commended, and the remembrance of his commendations gave me so much delight, that I wished to hear them repeated: I, therefore, told my mother, one day, that my drawing, when it was finished, would appear, I thought, to advantage, hung up in the parlour.

"Ay, Fanny," replied she, "when it is really finished: you draw and colour pretty well for the time you have learnt, but I intend to have you receive further instruction before you exhibit your performances, when I meet with a master to my mind."

This speech happened to be delivered when Sally was present, from whom I had not heard any more about my young gentleman.

The next day my mother was called down to a person who came to offer his service as a drawing-master.—In less than

than half an hour she came and told me that she had agreed with Mr. Bondysh, who was to come the following morning at eleven.

When I went to this new master, I was struck at the sight of him; I was exceedingly surprised, for he strongly resembled in his features and stature, air and manner, the young gentleman who had taken refuge in our house; but then that fine hair which so gracefully shaded his face, was no longer to be seen; a large brown bob wig was, apparently, the only covering to his head; and a slouching ill-made great coat, hanging loose about him, prevented me from distinguishing his shape; with an unruffled shirt, with a pair of dirty gloves, and with a suitableness throughout his whole dress, his figure was destitute of all gentility, still, however there was a captivating something

about him which put me in mind of my admirer, and indeed the resemblance was so glaring, that I could not help blushing when my eyes encountered his: and I could not persuade myself that I had never seen him before.

The moment he spoke, all my uncertainty about him was at an end; but my astonishment and my confusion were increased: I became, however, less and less embarrassed in his company, as he conversed in a manner perfectly easy and engaging both with my mother and with me: and the instructions which he gave me, intermixed with encomiums on my taste and genius, soon rendered me as free from stiffness as he himself was.—Nothing tends more to give us that decent assurance so necessary in our commerce with the world, as self-satisfaction; but that satisfaction can only be

be well founded when it arises from the praises bestowed upon us by people of judgment.

My mother, who seemed to be as highly pleased with Mr. Bendish as I was, declared, when he was gone, that she had a very good opinion of his abilities; but added, that she wondered why a man so capable of teaching to *draw*, should chuse to appear in so mean a dress.—"I cannot suppose that he wants employment," continued she, "he must therefore be either idle or extravagant: if he is idle he will never take the trouble to get money, and if he is extravagant, he will squander what he receives: he will, consequently, be needy, and needy people are always dangerous in a house: we must, therefore, have an eye upon him, while he comes hither.—His visits, however, to this house will not be frequent, as

you will learn more under *his* direction in a month, than with a man less qualified in his profession in a year."

I could not help inwardly agreeing with my mother most cordially, I own, tho' I gave my assent to what she had uttered with an aukward sort of a smile; as aukwardly I told her that, with such a master, much might be learnt in a little time.

Luckily for me tho' she is, in general, very penetrating, she did not comprehend the full meaning of my reply.

As soon as Sally came into the room, she darted a significant glance at me.—When we were by ourselves she said, "There, Miss, now I hope you will believe that Mr. Seymount — (that was the name which concluded his letter) is sincerely in love with you, since he has disguised himself on purpose to get into the house, that he may see you, and speak to you."

I took

I took the hint, and instantly replied, with as grave a face as I could put on, —"Pray Sally, how came you to fancy that Mr. Bendysh is Mr. Seymount? For my part, I confess, I never saw two people more different from each other."

"Ah! Miss Fanny," cried the girl, "you very well know, that the only difference between them lies in the appearance.

I made no answer; I had, already, learnt a little cunning: besides, I did not chuse, outwardly, to join with the maid in imposing upon my mother.—I knew that I had not invited Mr. Seymount to come and see me, either in his own dress, or disguised, and therefore was not accountable for the consequences.—His Person and conversation, indeed, gave me so much pleasure, that I could not wish for the prohibition of his visits; and, as long as I felt that I was not charge-

able with the introduction of him as a drawing-master, I thought I might, innocently, enjoy the agreeable sensations arising from them with propriety; and while I made no attempt to gratify the wishes of my heart indiscretely, I firmly believed, that no inconveniences could result from the deception with regard to Mr. Seymount's appearance.

Mr. Seymount hourly improved upon me as a companion, and I made hourly improvements under him as a master: I applied myself so closely to my drawing and painting, that I could scarce fail of making a considerable progress in them. He also attempted to render me sensible of the tender passion.—My mother watched us both very narrowly, but she did not, I fancy, entertain any suspicions concerning my lover, so dexterous was he in the management of his

looks,

looks, and in the conveyance of his notes. Often did he ſteal the moſt ſignificant glances at me, and often, in a moment for which he had waited with the utmoſt impatience, preſſed my hand unperceived, or whiſpered ſomething ſoft in my ear, or made ſome ſign which diſcovered what he wiſhed to communicate to me.—I was by no means a dull ſcholar in any ſhape, yet, in order to quicken my comprehenſion, he, on the ſecond day of his coming, found an opportunity to ſlip a letter into my hand, in which he again informed me of the violence of his paſſion; among many tender and flattering paſſages in it, were the following ones,—"You muſt ſurely be convinced of my ſincere attachment to you, as I have diſguiſed myſelf on purpoſe to gain admittance to you.

—My father is determined never to consent to my marrying any woman who has not a large fortune, but I solemnly declare, that I can feel tender sentiments for you alone; and as I knew that your mother would not permit me to visit you till I had it in my power to support my pretensions; as I was, also, unable to live without you, I pitched upon a method which promised success, and I have, hitherto, luckily succeeded.—I have only to wish that your sensations in my favour may be equal to mine in yours. Accept my best acknowledgement for not unmasking me to your mother, and for encouraging my endeavours to render myself agreeable to you."

The other passages were chiefly of the complimentary kind: but such compliments, Maria—sufficient to turn the head,

head, if not touch the heart of a young girl of my age, who was not void of sensibility.—However, not all his attentions and assiduities, too artfully calculated to gain upon the mind of a young person who had never been treated with such high adulation before, could make me so far forget myself, as to return any answer to his letter in writing; but I will honestly own that I, more than once, wished discretion would have warranted a written reply to it, as I thought he had, by condescending to disguise himself merely for the sake of seeing me, given a very strong proof of his passion for me.

By persevering in my prudential resolution, I made him, at length, really unhappy; he, certainly, appeared to be so, and the change in his countenance left me no room to suppose that my eyes were mistaken.—He looked exceedingly

dejected, sighed frequently, and seemed to be actually in a very agitated state.—The anxiety of his mind, strongly visible, was rendered still less disputable by the fretfulness and petulance which he often discovered in my company: the pensil and the colours frequently extorted peevish expressions from him, and sometimes such expressions were directed to me, tho' I could perceive that he strove to correct himself whenever he had too hastily thrown them out—I was not offended at them myself, I looked upon them as proofs of his sincerity, but they had a different effect upon my mother.—While he was polite, and even gallant in his behaviour, she appeared to be alarmed, and never left us together; the moment he grew dejected and peevish, she was off her guard, and believed that there was nothing to apprehend.

prehend.—(How often are the moſt ſagacious people miſtaken, juſt when they are paying themſelves the higheſt compliments upon their penetration?)—She went about her family affairs, therefore, without any ſupicions.

One day, when we were by ourſelves, Mr. Seymount threw himſelf at my feet, and with all the ſigns of a real paſſion in his countenance, with all the eloquence of a man truly enamoured, with all the impatience of a man eager to be drawn out of a ſtate of the moſt perplexing uncertainty, he intreated me only to ſay whether I thought it poſſible for me ever to think of him in the manner he wiſhed.—The language in which he delivered his ſentiments in my favour, the anxiety which diſturbed his fine features, his faultering voice, and the tremor through his whole frame, ſufficiently convinced me, that he loved me. I was not ſo weak as to ſup-

poſe

pose that, after so short an acquaintance, he could have a sincere esteem for me.—However, his behaviour was so affecting, that I could not behold him with indifference.

As I was naturally modest, and had acquired nice ideas about discretion, I was silent.

To oblige me to speak, he seized both my hands, and pressed them, alternately, to his lips; I did not withdraw them, because I did not think there was any harm in his holding them a little while, and because I was not willing to deprive him of the satisfaction which he seemingly enjoyed.

In this situation we remained some time, how long we should have remained in it, I cannot say, if my mother, quite unexpected, I am sure by us both, had not entered the room.

She started back a few paces, lifted up

up her hands and eyes with aſtoniſhment, and coloured like ſcarlet.

Seymount roſe precipitately.

"It is very well, Sir," ſaid ſhe—"I did not, I own, expect this behaviour, but as I may thank you for letting *me* into your ſecret, I ſhall not divulge it.—I ſhall only tell you, that you come no more to this houſe. As to my daughter, I ſhall, undoubtedly, make *her* ſenſible of the impropriety of her conduct, oblige her to return to her duty, and—"

"Ah, Madam," cried he, interrupting her; "hear me a moment—I dare believe that you will pardon what is paſt.—But ſhould you think you have reaſon to be offended with *me*, let me prevail on you to exculpate Miſs Wanley, for ſhe has in no ſhape deſerved your anger or reſentment on *my* account.—I loved her, Madam, the firſt inſtant chance

chance threw me in her way: and you may easily suppose that it was impossible for me not to love her more upon a nearer acquaintance.—But as I am so unfortunately circumstanced, at present, as not to be able to offer my hand—my father not having yet made me independent—I thought I might, with propriety, endeavour to secure her affections, especially, as I was, at the same time, trying to secure a fortune worthy of her acceptance. However, as I well knew that such a public avowal of my passion, if it should reach my father's ears (who thinks a woman with a small fortune no object for me) would retard the allowance which I wished to obtain for her sake alone, and as I dared not to expect the admission of my visits to Miss Wanley, till they were authorized by my father's approbation, or till I became

my

my own maſter; being alſo utterly unable to exiſt in a ſtate of ſuſpence with regard to Miſs Wanley's opinion, I availed myſelf of the firſt moment you left me alone with her, to plead my paſſion—I pleaded for a favourable anſwer, but you came in before any anſwer was returned: ſo that I am ſtill upon the rack of uncertainty.—Permit your amiable daughter, therefore Madam, to decide my fate in *your* preſence."

He then caſt the moſt imploring looks at *me*.—Equally aſhamed, and intimidated, I ſtood with my eyes fixed upon the floor, without uttering a ſingle ſyllable.

My mother haſtily anſwered for me—"I am willing to believe, Sir, that my daughter has been, hitherto, diſcreet, and I will do my utmoſt endeavour to keep her ſo.—Go, child, go up to your chamber

chamber immediately, and ſtay till I ſend for you."

I made a low curtſy, expreſſive of obedience, to my mother, and another to Mr. Seymount, with which I ſtrove to make grateful acknowledgments for all the fine things he had ſaid to me.

Juſt as I turned to leave the room, he ſtopped me; laid his hand gently on mine, and with a look at my mother, the moſt ſignificant imaginable, cried; "Ah! Madam! do not ſend her away till ſhe has declared whether ſhe can beſtow her affections upon me when it is in my power to ſolicit that bleſſing in a proper manner."

"When that day arrives, Sir," replied my mother, with a peremptory tone "it will be time enough for you to ſpeak to her about her anſwer.—Leave

us

us directly"—continued she, sternly, to me.

"Do not speak harshly to her," said Seymount, "do not chide her on my account: if there is any thing wrong in my being here, *she* has, certainly, no share in it: let her not, therefore, suffer a moment's uneasiness for *me*."

"Go, girl—go—" cried my mother, still more angrily.

More touched by my lover's pleadings for me, than by any part of his preceding carriage, I left the room, and left *him* with the reluctance which I could neither conquer nor conceal, from my mother at least.

My mother, coming, soon afterwards into my apartment, found me in tears.

"And so you are weak enough," said she, "to cry for this man; a man who cannot feel the smallest regard for you: a

man

man who, like too many of his ſex, purſues you only for your deſtruction; and you are not capable of ſeeing through his deſigns, or elſe are ſimple enough to be taken in by his ſmooth looks, and inſinuating ſpeeches.—This comes, child, from your ignorance; were you to ſee Seymount in a right light, you would, I dare ſay, be cured of your fooliſh fancy for him:—but come, wipe away your tears, and tell me every thing that has paſſed between you: by nothing, except a faithful relation of this ſilly affair, can you atone for the encouragement you have given Mr. Seymount without my approbation."

"Indeed," replied I, bluſhing, "I have not encouraged him."

"No?" anſwered ſhe—"What! did you not encourage him when you liſtened to him? With regard to our commerce with men, Fanny, there are but two

ways

ways of acting, a right and a wrong one. She who suffers a lover to make his addresses to her, gives him sufficient encouragement: but come; begin."

I obeyed, and spoke the truth.—Having mentioned the receipt of two letters my mother hastily desired to see them.

Trembling with shame, I drew them from my pocket and gave them to her, trying, at the same time, to hide my tears, and to dry them with my handkerchief.

When she had perused them with attention, she cooly put them into her pocket, and, looking earnestly at me, said, "And so you cry, child, because I have prevented a man from imposing on you, instead of thanking me for my care of you? you actually grieve at my saving you from ruin?"

By this time I had gained a little courage.

"As

"As Mr. Seymount, Madam, behaved to me in the most obliging manner, I could not help being sorry to see him roughly treated."

—"Roughly, do you call it, Miss? Did I, by desiring a man whose company is, by no means, proper for you, to come no more to the house, treat him roughly? But you are a simpleton, and don't know any better yet.—What you call an obliging manner, is only flattery: all men entertain young women with flattering language; it costs them nothing: it frequently, however, makes too deep an impression upon weak minds, as it soothes our vanity and self-love, two passions ever eager to be gratified. We are naturally inclined to like those who seem to feel an inclination for us, and—".

"Is not such a propensity in us laudable?" said I, interrupting her with a spirit

spirit of which I did not think myself capable—"Whom should we love but those who love us?"

My mother stared at me.—I was not a little surprized at myself, but I felt a kind of esteem for Mr. Seymount rising from gratitude, for his consideration on my account, and under the impulse of that emotion was, perhaps, unbecomingly bold in my behaviour, yet I thought, at the same time, that I barely did Mr. Seymount justice by my spirited carriage.

My mother soon replied in a tone and manner which silenced me—"Parents and guardians are," said she, "the only persons to be first consulted upon these occasions. It cannot be properly said, that Mr. Seymount has made any proposal to me on your account, because he is dependent on his father, and because s father will not render him otherwise, unless

unless he consents to marry a women with a large fortune.—Think no more of him, therefore; he ought never to be thought on by you for many reasons: besides, supposing him to be a proper person for you, can you imagine that such forwardness will not disgust him? The way to win men is to keep them in pursuit; the pleasure of the chase is at an end when the game is taken."

This last observation of my mother's hurt me more than any thing she had said. I was so much pained to be tho' indirectly, charged with having discovered too great a fondness for a man almost a stranger to me, that I absolutely shrunk within myself and retired, covered with confusion, determining, whatever it cost me, to give no farther encouragement to Mr. Seymount, should he solicit me ever so much. On second thoughts, however,

ever, I concluded that if he was really the man my mother had deſcribed, he would naturally avoid me as a girl unworthy of his attention.—This reflection drew a flood of tears from my eyes.—Yet I wept more for the imputation of indelicacy, than for the abſence of my lover. —My mother's ſatirical inuendo, with regard to my forwardneſs, made me extremely miſerable, and I reſolved to behave with the greateſt reſerve when any men fell in my way.—I forgot to tell you that, upon my mother's enquiring how I came by the letters—for I had never been accuſtomed to diſguiſe the truth—ſhe ſuſpected Sally: Sally was therefore inſtantly diſcharged, and another maid ſupplied her place.—I was ſorry to be under a neceſſity of making Sally ſuſpected, but I always abhorred deceit, and could not think of joining with her in impoſing upon my mother.

A few days after we were settled again, my mother ordered me to dress myself to go out, and, having sent for a coach, bade the man drive to Kensington-Gardens. The pleasantness of the evening, and the different sets of company scattered up and down the walks, afforded me great entertainment, but I thought too much of Mr. Seymount, not to wish that he had been by my side, and not to sigh for his appearance.—More than once was I in hopes of meeting him *en passant*, but when I found myself disappointed—(tho' I had not any reason to expect the sight of him) I became dejected, and made very short answers to every thing my mother said to me.

At last we met with an old gentleman whom I had never seen before. My mother called him Sir Thomas. He accosted us with a great deal of politeness, and surveyed me from head to foot with an

at-

attention, which would have considerably disgusted me, had I not been thinking about quite a different man.

When the Baronet had finished his examination of *my* person, and taken off his eyes, my curiosity led me to take a view of *his*.—He was very tall, and genteelly made, but stooped a little from his age; his features were all elegant, and I dare say his complexion had been naturally a fine one, but it appeared, at that time, the complexion of art—His face was smooth, but disagreeably so, and the gloss upon it evidently resulted from a cosmetick wash. His teeth were, apparently, false ones, and they did not, in my opinion, make him look younger. This antiquated, patched-up figure, however, soon attached himself to me, and strove, by numberless civilities and assiduities to please me; but in vain did he attempt to give me pleasure. How of-

fenſive are the efforts of the old, to ſhine in parts in which the young only play with any propriety?

We walked till I was quite weary of my venerable admirer, and not at all ſatisfied with the behaviour of my mother: they would have been both glad, moſt probably, to have ſeated themſelves, ſo tired were they—not of each other's company, but of the exerciſe.

Sir Thomas, perceiving, by our looks, that we wiſhed to ſit down, aſked my mother if he ſhould order his coach to come up to the garden-gate.

On her aſſenting to his propoſal, he handed us in, and bade the coachman to drive home.

We ſtopped in Groſvenor-Square.

As I knew nothing of the deſign concerted between Sir Thomas and my mother, I was ſurprized at our entrance into a magnificent houſe. The lofty

ſtair-

ſtair-caſe, the ſuite of rooms, pictures, glaſſes, girandoles, vaſes, carpets; in ſhort, every object I ſaw attracted my attention.—Yet, as I found myſelf extremely unwilling to be pleaſed with the Baronet, or with any thing belonging to him, I was inclined to repreſs my aſtoniſhment, or my ſatisfaction—He was plainly upon the watch for both, and looked at me as if he wiſhed to read them in my countenance. Early in life I ſcorned deceit, but I thought it very allowable, almoſt meritorious, to conceal ſenſations from Sir Thomas, which, if diſcovered, might have given him more pleaſure than he was worthy of enjoying.—He did not appear to be an object deſerving of my eſteem, moſt certainly he had no attractions to excite my love. However, a lover he endeavoured to be, and omitted nothing to induce me to

look upon him in a favourable light. All his little tendernesses only served to render him doubly ridiculous in my eyes; and as he was really a man wholly disagreeable to me, I chagrined him not a little (his chagrin was sufficiently observable) by the coolness, and by the indifference with which I behaved to him.

When we had supped in the most elegant taste, my mother and I got again into the old gentleman's coach, and returned home.

While we were going home, my mother asked me, if I did not think Sir Thomas Combes a very fine gentleman, and a very agreeable man.

"I allow him to be a very fine gentleman," replied I, "according to the notions which many people have of that character, but I cannot allow him to be an agreeable man."

"You cannot?—upon my word you are

are excessively nice, Miss, and mighty particular in your opinion, for Sir Thomas is generally thought to be one of the most agreeable men in the world."

I coloured at this reproof: and was the more uneasy, because I imagined that something would happen, from the Kensington interview, to give me no small disquietude.

I retired to bed as soon as I could, but in a very restless situation.—A thousand disturbing reflections followed each other rapidly in my mind—During the greatest part of the night I was hindered, by those reflections, from sleeping.—Towards Morning, I fell into a pleasing slumber, and did not wake from it till the maid came to tell me, that Sir Thomas was below, and that they waited breakfast for me.

I rose exceedingly out of humour.

Before I had been able to rouze my

ſpirits, my mother hurried into my room, wondering how I could lay in bed ſo long, and bade me make haſte, and take care to dreſs myſelf to the beſt advantage. She ordered me, at the ſame time, what gown to put on; it was the beſt I had, and I felt inexpreſſible uneaſineſs upon the occaſion, becauſe I conjectured from her being ſo ready to let me appear *dreſſed* before breakfaſt, that ſhe had no deſign herſelf to make an addition to my wardrobe.—However, tho' I dared not abſolutely to diſobey her, I was ſo much pained at the thoughts of making a parading appearance ſo early in the day, that I ventured to try if I could prevail on her to let me come down in one of my common gowns: but to no purpoſe.—My oppoſition, the gentleſt to be conceived, only ſerved to give force to the ſtorm of anger gathering againſt me.—I therefore complied: but

but I made them wait a considerable time.—I would not, on any account, have been so dilatory, had my mother been alone, but every kind of delay which kept me from Sir Thomas, gave me pleasure.

At last, after having received a very pressing message from my mother, I entered the parlour.

The old gentleman arose up in an ecstatic manner to receive me, but was not a little checked, in the midst of his raptures, by the solemnity of my face, and the very respectful curtsey which I made him—(such a curtsey as I should naturally have made my great grandfather, had I known him) somewhat disconcerted him.—However, he accosted me with a lively familiarity.

Drawing back on a sudden, I beheld my old lover in a very ridiculous light. —He started, and actually capered with

surprize: but his looks were by no means so brisk as his feet.

"What's the matter with the girl this morning?" cried my mother, with a frown, "come sit down; you hinder Sir Thomas from taking his breakfast."

I replied, that I would on no account disturb the gentleman, and walked, most maliciously, to the other side of the breakfast table, tho' he placed a chair close by his own for me. I was not indeed much better off by the removal of myself. I avoided his touch indeed, which was extremely odius to me, but by fixing his monstrous large eyes on me the whole time I sat opposite to him, he put me every moment out of countenance: and his indelicate encomiums on my person, increased my confusion so much, that I could neither look up, nor enjoy the least satisfaction: my eyes and ears were both

grossly

grossly affronted by him.—"What a lovely profile is there! what a fine rising bosom!—how delicious the moisture of those ruby lips! what a charming languishing down cast of her eye!" Such was his language, but his looks were, beyond expression, disgusting, and would not bear the interpretation which, ignorant as I was, I could not help putting upon them.

Soon after breakfast, my mother rose to leave the room.—I followed her, trembling, left I should be stopped.—My fears were not groundless.—Sir Thomas caught my hand, and my mother, in a commanding tone cried, "Stay where you are."

I coloured, hung down my head, and was conducted back to my chair by the Baronet, who, perceiving that those violent freedoms rather frighted than al-

lured me, assumed a more decent, and proper carriage. He entered into conversation with me, and indeed, if I had heard what he said to me in other accents, and unaccompanied with amorous twinklings, I should have pronounced him to be an entertaining man.

In about half an hour my mother returned, and told me that I might go to mydrawing. I obeyed her with pleasure.

Just when I was sitting down with my pencil in my hand, I recollected that a little flower-piece, which hung in the back parlour, wanted a few touches.

As soon as I entered the room softly, fearful of being dragged back again to my venerable admirer, if discovered— I heard Sir Thomas say "Marry her madam? you cannot expect me to marry a girl whom nobody knows, of no family, no fortune :—that will never do—No—I think

think a *thousand* down, with five hundred a year, is a very good offer, and if you do not like it, why you are at liberty to make a better bargain where you can: but I protest I do not know the man who will give you half a crown more: a thousand pound is a great deal of money, Mrs. Wanley."

"Why sure, Sir Thomas, you would not have me sell my child?"

"As to that, Madam, you know best your own affairs; for my part, I have not been used to treat in the mercantile manner, I don't understand trade: I think your daugher a d—d fine girl: you only say a few civil things of me to her, and I present this bank note to you as a *douçeur*; that's all, my dear madam; there is nothing more in it, upon my honour."

You may imagine, my dear friend, how

how I felt when I heard this curious dialogue—I stood quite confounded, almost petrified, rooted to the floor.

My mother hesitated to make a reply to Sir Thomas's last speech.

As soon as I had recovered myself a a little, I could not help pouring out my grateful thanks to Providence, for having thrown me into the way of being acquainted with the cruel, unnatural, abominable design forming against me. —It was not in the least surprizing, that a man of Sir Thomas's principles, should endeavour to seduce the girl who had struck his eye; but that a mother should seem willing to part with her child upon dishonourable terms, prompted by lucrative motives—Astonishing! Yet such a mother was mine: She hesitated for some moments, but at last closed with the offered terms.—The

old

old dotard took an infinite deal of pains to make her look upon the *agreement* between them in a fair light.

I cannot describe the sensations I felt, when I heard the time appointed for the delivery of me up to infamy, which was to be when Sir Thomas had got the abstract of a settlement of five hundred a year during my life, ready to be signed. —Nothing could equal the horror which seized me, when I heard the conclusion of so scandalous a bargain.—However, I had something else to do than to indulge reflections, which might have rendered me incapable of saving myself from the threatened destruction.

As soon as I recovered a little from my amazement, I burst into a flood of tears.—When I had wiped them away, fearing I should make a discovery, I returned to my chamber, to consider of the

the moſt proper ſteps to take to extricate myſelf out of ſo dangerous a ſituation.—The more I ruminated upon my ineligible condition, the more was I at a loſs how to act. My mother had always lived in a retired way: that is, we did not ſee much company: and among thoſe who came to the houſe, ſhe ſuffered me to contract no intimacies; to whom, therefore, could I apply? Surely not to a ſtranger! Beſides, young and unexperienced as I was, I had, already at an early age, ſeen that there was hardly any confidence to be placed in men: I will honeſtly own, however, that I ſeveral times thought of Seymount; I had indeed, affected to diſbelieve all my mother's inſinuations againſt him; yet I more than once, fancied that her ſuſpicions might be well grounded, but his flattering carriage to me, added to his amiable

amiable manners, and agreeable perſon, made a little impreſſion upon me, tho' it could not be ſaid that I was actually in love with him:—*that* impreſſion was, undoubtedly, ſtrengthened by the contraſt between him and my antiquated lover, not only in their age, and external appearance, but in their principles. Sir Thomas had poſitively declared that he would not marry me; Mr. Seymount had aſſured my mother that it was his deſign to make me his wife.—However, as I had neither heard of him, nor ſeen him, from the time he made that declaration, I had ſome inducement to believe that *he* might be as unwilling to marry as the Baronet was: but ſuppoſing Seymount to have been ready to take me under his protection, ſhould I not have acted madly, by

truſt-

trusting to him?——What measures to take, therefore, I could not tell—There was no hoping to move my mother. A woman who had listened to a proposal for the prostitution of her daughter, would have been, most probably, deaf to all that daughter's intreaties.

I sat ruminating upon the difficult part I had to perform, till I was almost wild: while I was so engaged, my mother came up stairs from Sir Thomas.

Bursting into my room, she cried, "Hey, child, what is the matter?—what are you crying your eyes out for?"

I actually blushed at her assurance: I was hurt to see her so chearful, after having been guilty of an action which ought to have filled her with the most cutting remorse.

I made no reply at first; I was indeed

kept

kept ſilent both by grief and indignation.

The repetition of her queſtions, with another more galling one added to them, rouſed me.

"Are you whimpering after Seymount?"

I then had ſpirit enough to ſay—"I have not been weeping upon his account, madam; but I believe I ſhall always prefer him to Sir Thomas."

"You think you ſhall!" replied my mother, with a kind of ſneer—"but really, Fanny, if you will take my advice, you had better not give him the preference, for the diſcovery of it may occaſion you more trouble than you are at preſent aware of: and you will ſoon find it more prudent to forget Mr. Seymount, and to employ your whole time in ſtudying to pleaſe Sir Thomas."

My lips were ſealed—I plainly perceived

ceived that I ſhould only talk to no purpoſe by opening them, and therefore dried up my tears as well as I could. —My mother, as I continued ſilent, ſoon left me.

The moment ſhe was gone out of my room, I faſtened the door, and throwing myſelf on my knees, humbly and ardently beſought the Almighty, the guardian of the innocent, to deliver me from the diſtreſsful ſituation to which I was deſtined by a mercenary mother; a ſituation, from which no human being, I thought, could ſave me.

By addreſſing myſelf to the protector of the orphan—I felt myſelf an orphan in the moſt melancholy ſenſe of the word, as my father had been long dead, and as my mother had ceaſed to be a parent —I calmed my diſturbed mind a little: but the more I reflected upon my mother's

ther's behaviour, the more was I ſhocked at it, and the leſs able to account for it. Had I, in any ſhape, injured her, ſhe might have been provoked to be my enemy; ſhe would have had ſome plea for her carriage, if I had been an undutiful or a vicious daughter; ſhe would have been naturally enough induced to get rid of ſuch a daughter, tho' ſhe could not have made a rational excuſe for diſpoſing of her in a ſhameful manner—My condition was the more pitiable, and the more diſtreſſing, as I knew not to whom to apply for aſſiſtance.

After much conſideration, I at laſt determined to try to move Sir Thomas himſelf in my favour: but on ſecond thoughts I altered my reſolution: imagining that a man who could bring himſelf to give a thouſand pounds for the gratification of a lawleſs paſſion would not pay much attention to any thing I could

ſay

ſay in oppoſition to it, and that I could not ſafely truſt myſelf in his power.—I was doubly convinced of the impropriety of ſuch a ſtep very ſoon afterwards.

Sir Thomas made a ſecond viſit the next day. My mother left me a conſiderable time with him, tho' I had made a great many objections to ſuch a proceeding. He then took liberties which were very offenſive, and even terrifying; however, they infuſed ſpirit enough in me, to tell him that they ſhould never be repeated, tho' my life depended upon my refuſal.

He actually ſtared to hear me talk to him in an eager and angry tone about his behaviour, and endeavoured to pacify me, to ſoften me to his infamous purpoſe, by calling me "little, trembling fool, and pretty blushing charmer," and ſuch ſtuff: but I flew from him.—I

was roundly reprimanded, indeed, by my mother, who, taking me by the hand, attempted to lead me down to him again, yet I hung back with all the strength in my power, and protested I would see him no more.

At this protestation of mine, my mother seemed to be very much alarmed: after having called me a ridiculous chit, she went down stairs by herself.

I slipped softly after her into the back parlour, and overheard her tell Sir Thomas that he had been too violent, and that he must stay till he got me quite in his own power before he proceeded to such lengths.—"Indeed, Sir Thomas," added she, "I cannot have any disturbance in my house, nor give encouragement to any suspicions—What do you imagine the neighbours will think? No, no, pray be quiet till the girl is under your own

own care; you may then, ſafely, do what you pleaſe with her."

They then proceeded to lay the plan for my being delivered up. To prevent a refractory carriage on my part, and to occaſion no injurious conjectures among the neighbours, my mother and I were to go ſixty miles out of town in a hired poſt chaiſe: we were to diſcharge *that*, and hire another to carry us ten miles acroſs the country, to a houſe belonging to Sir Thomas, the houſe deſtined for my ruin.—I had, therefore, no time to loſe.

Not knowing whom to truſt, or whither to go, I, the next morning, put ſome of my beſt and ſmalleſt linen into my pocket, and making up ſome of the reſt of my cloaths in as a large a bundle as I could carry, took the firſt opportunity my mother gave me, by her abſence

absence from home, to find some employment for the maid, and while she was too much employed to observe me, walked into the street.

Into the street I walked, but in such agitation, that I could scarce set one foot before the other—How to dispose of myself I was utterly at a loss—I could not live upon air; I could not sleep exposed to the elements. It was absolutely necessary for me to think of somebody who might be willing either to take me in, or to put me in a way of getting a temporary asylum. I could not apply to a stranger, and I was afraid of venturing myself in the hands of my mother's friends, lest they should betray me.

With these reflections rolling in my mind, I walked on: yet they did not prevent my attention to the business of the moment. Not having been much ac-

cuſtomed to walk by myſelf, I was not a little embarraſſed and fluttered by the obſervations which were made upon me.—I was not over dreſſed, indeed, but I made ſo genteel an appearance, that the bundle which I carried ſeemed to be an unſuitable part of it.—The men ſaid civil things to me as they paſſed: The women drew up their heads with contemptuous ſneers, looking very diſdainfully both at me and my bundle. Galled by ſo ungenerous a behaviour in my own ſex, and apprehenſive that the other would take unbecoming liberties with me, I redoubled my ſteps, in order to get out of the reach of both, tho' I had no particular point of ſecurity in view.

While I was hurrying along, I met an elderly gentlewoman whom I had ſeen

at

at my mother's, but who was not very intimate with her.

She ſtopped me, however, and aſked me, whither I was going with my bundle.

That queſtion rouſed me, and made me ſtill more ſenſible of my forlorn and helpleſs condition.

I looked up, and burſt into tears.

"What makes you cry, child?" replied ſhe.

"O madam," anſwered I, ſobbing, "let me go home with you, and I will tell you all."

I could not utter any more words.

She appeared aſtoniſhed, and looked rather cool at me; but tho' my delicacy was great, my diſtreſs was greater: beſides, I had no time to be ceremonious—I trembled leſt I ſhould be dragged back to my mother, or to Sir Thomas,

and prefſed the old gentlewoman to make haſte; but as ſhe was neither of an age, nor of a diſpoſition to pay any regard to my precipitation, ſhe crept along in her uſual ſnail-pace, while I walked ſometimes before, in hopes of animating her to follow me, and ſometimes even with her, that I might prevail on her to quicken her motion.—But to very little purpoſe were all my ſtimulating endeavours.

We, at laſt, arrived at her houſe.—I then, told her my ſtory in the beſt manner I could; tho' you may be ſure I was very loth to expoſe my mother. Mrs. Burdet, indeed, ſaved me the pain I muſt have felt by ſuch an expoſure, for ſhe plainly informed me, that ſhe believed I had accuſed my mother falſely, on purpoſe to execute ſome ſcheme of my own, and that ſhe would

either

either acquaint my mother with my design, or not trouble herself about me.

I then desired her to let the affair quite alone; and taking up my bundle, which I had laid down, hastened towards the door, tho' my tears flowed so fast that I could hardly see my way. —She called me back, bade me sit down, and then asked me what I intended to do.

"I really cannot tell how to act, madam," said I, "and you will double my gratitude, by giving me your advice, as well as affording me your protection."

"I am not able to protect you, child —and as to my advice, I think the best thing you can do, is to go home, and make it up with your mother."

I told her that my mother and I had not fallen out, as I had been afraid to let her know I had overheard what had

paſt, leſt ſhe ſhould have carried me to Sir Thomas immediately, out of whoſe hands I could not have hope to eſcape.

"As to that," replied Mrs. Burdet, "if he marries you, you ought not to deſire to leave him: and I cannot ſuppoſe your mother capable of ſurrendering you to him upon any other terms: but you do not, perhaps, like a man ſo many years older than yourſelf; and, probably, want to run after ſome other man who is more to your taſte,"

I aſſured her that ſhe was miſtaken. "However, madam," added I, "tho' my mother has not acted like a parent upon this occaſion, ſhe brought me up to abhor lying and deceit, and I will, therefore, freely own that I ſhould not be happy with Sir Thomas for my huſband; as freely confeſs that he never had any deſign to marry me, and can truly declare

clare that I have no connection, not even an acquaintance, with any other man."

My repeated aſſurances, and my tears together, pleaded ſtrongly for me at laſt.—Yet Mrs. Burdet over and over declared that ſhe could not tell how to believe what I had ſaid concerning my mother.—"You certainly have miſinterpreted what you overheard: your antipathy to Sir Thomas made you fancy things which were never intended: your mother could only mean to inſiſt upon your being married to him, and will not ſurely part with you but upon the moſt honourable conſiderations."

I told her, that I was very certain I had not been miſtaken with regard to the thouſand pounds which Sir Thomas was to pay to my *mother* on her carrying me to him, with the ſettlement he was to make on *me*.

Mrs. Burdet heard me out, ſurveyed me attentively, and then ſaid, "And pray, child, what do you purpoſe to do? I cannot keep you if I was ever ſo willing to take you into my houſe: nobody, indeed, has a right to detain a child from her mother while ſhe is under age."

"I ſhould be very ready, madam," replied I, "to return to my mother, could I be ſure that ſhe would not deſire me to ſacrifice myſelf in the manner I have mentioned, but at the ſame time I muſt frankly own, that after what I have ſeen and heard, I cannot bring myſelf to go home again—I will go to any other place: I will work for my ſubſiſtence."

"What work can ſuch a little delicate thing as *you* do?" anſwered ſhe.

"I can wait upon a lady: I can paint fans; I can ſoon learn ſomething in the millinary way."

"To

"To wait upon a lady, or to be a milliner's girl, is to be in a hazardous situation," said she, "and you cannot, I imagine, paint well enough to make your performances turn to account."

I then opened my bundle, and shewed her specimens which I had packed up, as I intended to amuse myself with my pencil, if ever I had an opportunity.

The old gentlewoman looked at them, but seemed to have no relish for them; and in a few moments, answered, "It is not in *my* power to assist you—you must, therefore, go home to your mother."

This reply was like a sentence of death to me: she could not have uttered a more cutting speech to me.—Rising, with my eyes bathed in tears, I fell on my knees, and besought her, if ever she wished to be happy herself, to save me from ruin.—"Let me remain with you,

Madam," added I, "only till I can get a place that will ſuit me: I ſhall not be in the leaſt expenſive to you—I will work for you: Providence will enable me to repay you in ſome ſhape: O do not throw me into the ſtreet—only try me — I am ſincere—I will be honeſt—let me live to bleſs you for your charity."

My increaſing ſorrow would not permit me to proceed.—Sobs choaked my utterance.

I do not know whether ſhe was melted or not, but ſhe bade me get up, and told me ſhe would conſider of what I had delivered.

We ſat ſilent a few moments.—When I had recovered myſelf a little, ſhe ſaid, "Should I be diſpoſed to try if you have ſpoken nothing but the truth, how will it be poſſible for me to conceal you from your mother? or indeed, ought I to attempt the concealment of you?

Be-

Beſides, I cannot afford to keep you, and if you follow any buſineſs how is it to be done privately ?"

"I will not go by my name," replied I, "but will live quite retired in your houſe, and fetch and carry my work of a night: I will wait on you, I will nurſe you when you are ſick : you ſhall be my mother, and I will be your child."

"You are an artful, deſigning girl," anſwered ſhe, with a ſoftened voice: "you ſhall, however, remain here this evening, and I will think about ſome employment for you."

I fell on my knees again to thank her: ſhe then left me alone for above half an hour.

Immediately, on her departure, I offered up my grateful thanks to the Almighty, for having moved Mrs. Burdet's heart ſo much in my favour, and then conſidered whether I was actually ſafer

under *her* protection than under my mother's: and as my mother had been capable of acting in so mercenary a manner, I thought I had some reason to fear that a woman to whom I was almost a stranger, and who had but a small income, might be tempted to look upon me with lucrative views.—I knew nothing at all of Mrs. Burdet: I had not seen her more than twice at my mother's, and then she staid only a short time; my mother had met her in the street, and brought her home with her.—They mentioned me, I remember, as a fine grown girl, but I was going to school, and did not much mind them. My mother and Mrs. Burdet did not seem to be pleased with each other; yet there was something in the countenance of the latter which I did not dislike: however, I was not interested in any enquiry about her, and therefore no enquiry did I

make.

make.—While I was trying to recollect any more circumſtances relating to her, ſhe returned to me, and bade me follow her up ſtairs into a room which joined to her bed-chamber. In that room I might, ſhe told me, put my bundle.

Soon afterwards we went to dinner, and entered into chat. I found her an agreeable companion. She had a very ſmall houſe, with only a tight girl by way of ſervant, and let out her firſt floor to a widow lady, who kept alſo one maid—The lady was, at that time, out of town.

We talked little of *my* affairs the reſt of the day: at night ſhe informed me that I was to ſleep with Patty her ſervant.

As ſoon as breakfaſt was over, ſhe went out, and returned in about an hour.

During her abſence, I took up an apron which

which ſhe had left upon her drawers, and which wanted, I perceived, mending, and began to darn it, in order to ſhew her how willing I was to make all the amends in my power for her kindneſs to me.

When ſhe came in ſhe ſaid, "I have been with your mother, Fanny—"

I ſtarted, concluding that ſhe had been to her purpoſely to tell her where I was, and that I was loſt for ever.—My work dropped from my hands? I turned as pale as death,—and cried out, "I am undone."

"Not yet," anſwered ſhe, with a half ſmile—"you are a grateful girl I ſee, and I believe, an honeſt one.—I went to your mother: ſhe was gone out, the maid told me, in ſearch of you—and by what I could worm out of her, I find that you have not deceived me; but we muſt now

think

think of ſome method to conceal you, and to enable you at the ſame time, to get your living. Your name ſhall be Oſgood: I will, this afternoon, carry your painting to a printſeller of my acquaintance, who will, I hope, find buſineſs for you, only you muſt be content to keep cloſe for the preſent, and I will manage your affairs till your mother and Sir Thomas have ceaſed to make a ſearch after you."

This propoſal pleaſed me exceedingly. I was ſo charmed with it that I leaped up, and threw my arms round Mrs. Burdet's neck, calling her my deareſt friend, my generous preſerver.

She appeared to be ſatisfied with my gratitude—"Continue to be good," ſaid ſhe, "and all will, I dare pronounce, do well."

In a few days I had as many prints to colour as I could do; but Mrs. Burdet

and

and the print-seller—whom I had not yet seen—settled things between themselves in such a manner, that the profits arising from my labours were inconsiderable.—However, I made no complaints, but worked hard, and chearfully, not once venturing to leave the house, left I should be seen by somebody who might acquaint either my mother or Sir Thomas with the place of my residence.

One morning Mrs. Burdet came, hurrying into the little room, in which I sat at work, and asked me for the coloured drawing which she had shewn to the printseller; and which had induced him to employ me, and which had been returned to me as it was unfinished.

I gave it her.

The next day she told me that a gentleman would come and talk with me concerning

concerning it. He, accordingly, came —He was a polite, elderly man, with a nosegay of fine fresh flowers in his hand. He asked me if I thought I could draw them, and paint them in their natural colours.

I told him I would try.

He then gave them to me. I placed them in the most picturesque manner I could, in a bottle of water.—In two or three days he called again, and finding them exactly drawn, and coloured, and in a manner too, which pleased him— "You have discovered both genius and taste," said he, "and I must desire to have a little private conversation with you."

Mrs. Burdet then quitted the room, but I saw plainly by her looks, that she quitted it with no great satisfaction.

As soon as she was gone, Mr. Hyam told me, that as I was very able to draw

and

and colour flowers and plants from nature, he would gladly employ me; adding, that he ſhould be glad to know my terms.

"I am totally ignorant, Sir," replied I, "of the value of pieces of this kind, and will therefore leave it to you to determine the worth of them."

He then aſked me what I received for colouring prints, and I freely acquainted him with the trifling ſums which had been paid to me for my performances.

He looked earneſtly at me, and ſhrugged his ſhoulders—"Is the gentlewoman who left us juſt now your mother?" ſaid he.

I coloured at the queſtion, and anſwered in the negative.

"What right then has ſhe to ſo large a ſhare of your profits?"

"She

"She is a friend," replied I, "to whom I am very much obliged, and I ſhould be glad to have it in my power to gain enough to make ſuitable returns for the favours which I have received from her." —"And *I*," ſaid he, "ſhall chuſe to pay you, myſelf, that you may be enabled to ſhew your generoſity."—Putting five guineas into my hand, he added, "You ſhall have the ſame ſum for the plant which you will receive from me to-morrow, and I will mention you to ſeveral of my friends in an advantageous manner, who may, perhaps, employ you when I have nothing for you to do. Such a genius, and ſuch induſtry ought to be encouraged." I not only thanked Mr. Hyam with the moſt grateful expreſſions I could articulate, but my eyes overflowed with gratitude, and as I thought that my little labours had been

been over-rated, I offered to return the money to him — "Stay, Sir," said I, "this is too much for a first attempt, when I do better I shall deserve it."

At that instant Mrs. Bordet rushed into the room, and laying hold of my arm, cried, "What is the foolish girl about? why, are you such a ridiculous simpleton, Fanny, as to give back money? It is very plain that you are not fit to be your own cash-keeper. But I hope, Sir," continued she, addressing herself, with a softened voice, to Mr. Hyam, "I hope you will not suffer her to make such ducks and drakes of her money: how is she to live pray, and who must pay for her board and lodging? She ought to consider me, if she takes no thought for herself." Then, turning, to me, "Pretty doings," continued she, "to refuse five guineas!

guineas! why, you muſt, certainly, be diſtracted."

The latter part of the above ſpeech, delivered in an outrageous manner, not a little diſconcerted me: I felt my face glow with ſhame, and could gladly have crept into any corner to hide myſelf, leſt Mr. Hyam ſhould imagine that I, in any ſhape, accorded with ſuch a mercenary, ſuch a violent women: yet tho' I deteſted the meanneſs of her principles, I was under too many obligations to her to oppoſe her ſtrongly. I therefore caſt down my eyes, and was ſilent.

"Don't be alarmed, Mrs. Burdet," ſaid Mr. Hyam, in whoſe benovelent countenance I had, at firſt, read compaſſion for *me*, and contempt for *her*; "I am not going to avail myſelf of this young lady's noble behaviour in a cenſurable manner. She who has but little, and who induſtriouſly

riouſly employs her excellent talents to make the leaſt addition to it, merits the greateſt encouragement and generoſity from thoſe who are bleſt with taſte to admire, and with money to purchaſe her labours."——Then, turning to me, he added, "My ſervant, Miſs Oſgood, ſhall attend you to-morrow with the plant I have mentioned, and I dare ſay the drawing taken by you from it, will give me the higheſt ſatisfaction."

I made him a low curtſy—I could not ſpeak, the reſpectful politeneſs with which he behaved to me, filled me with the moſt pleaſing ſenſations, but when he was gone, and when I ſaw Mrs. Burdet ſwelling with rage, I ſighed to think into what hands I had fallen: a moment's conſideration, however, as ſhe

had

had taken me in when nobody elſe would have, perhaps, received me, brought me to a reſolution to live upon the beſt terms poſſible with her—That reſolution was ſtrengthened by gratitude.

Her firſt words, after Mr. Hyam's departure, were, "And ſo now you have feathered your neſt, you think to ſet up for yourſelf, and leave me to get my money where I can for your board and lodging: but let me tell you, girl, for you are neither more nor leſs, for all he *Miſſed* you up and *young Ladied* you ſo; let me tell you, I ſay, that I will take care to pay myſelf, or you ſhall turn out into the ſtreet, or what you like ſtill worſe, go back to your mother: *ſhe* ſhall know where, and who you are; I won't harbour a pert, handſome young huſſey, to fly in my face every moment:

no,

no, no, you shall go back again to her whom you call mother.

"Would I could not call her mother," whispered I to myself. "Had I had another parent, I should not have been in this situation."—Such was my little soliloquy, but as I was so unfortunately situated, I thought it was more prudent to accomodate myself to my condition: I endeavoured, therefore, to sooth Mrs. Burdet, by telling her, that I had only refused so large a sum, because I looked upon it as too considerable for my drawing; adding, that as Mr. Hyam had so genteely obliged me to receive it, she should have half of it; assuring her, at the same time, that the moiety of all my profits should be at her service.

She held out her hand eargerly for the offered share of Mr. Hyam's five guineas, and I plainly saw, by the avidity with

with which she seized it, that she gladly would have grasped the whole.—That mean-spirited mode of proceeding gave me a very indifferent opinion of her, and I began to think myself not much, if at all, safer with her than with my mother.—However, I flattered myself that I should find a valuable friend in Mr. Hyam, hoping that he would not only employ me, on his own account, agreeably to his promise, but protect me from this woman's insolence, if his protection should be necessary. In consequence of my flattering hopes, I strove to coax Mrs. Burdet into a good humour, that evening.

The next day I began my new drawing, and was successful beyond my expectations. Before it was finished, Mr. Hyam came to look at it. He bestowed the most animating encomiums on my

 execution,

execution, and aſked my leave to bring a friend, the following morning, to ſee it. You may be ſure that I chearfully aſſented to a requeſt made with true politeneſs.

On the appointed morning he entered my apartment, accompanied by a young man of faſhion, whoſe firſt appearance prejudiced me in favour of his underſtanding. He was tall, finely made, and had a dignity in his air and addreſs which immediately diſcovered him to be a man of ſenſe, elegantly educated. The turn of his countenance was ſerious; manlineſs and ſolidity were conſpicuous in it. When he ſmiled there was a becoming pleaſantry about his mouth, which was of no ſmall advantage to his face; his forehead was high, his hair grew thick, and graceful, and his eyes ſeemed to pierce into your very ſoul.

"This

"This is the young lady, my Lord," ſaid Mr. Hyam, preſenting me to him, while I roſe to receive him, "with whoſe maſterly performances I am ſo much pleaſed,"

My Lord offered his hand to receive the drawing which I held out to him, but at the ſame time rivetted his eyes ſo intenſely on my face, that he almoſt diſconcerted me. He ſeemed to be both ſenſible of the embarraſſment he had occaſioned, and ſorry for it, by throwing his eyes, haſtily upon the vellum.

He looked earneſtly at the drawing for ſome time, without ſpeaking.—While he was ſo engaged, Mr. Hyam leaned on his ſhoulder, and cried, "Well, my Lord, have I deceived you? is it not worth your attention?"

"It is, indeed inimitable," replied his Lordſhip: "how exactly has the

pencil copied nature! yet what pencil," continued he, "can do justice to that fine face?—I beg pardon, Madam—(seeing me blush) but I came here to admire."

I got courage enough, at last, to reply that my Lord and Mr. Hyam, both, did me a great deal of honour, and sat down to my work.

They staid a good while, and entered into conversation with me upon several subjects.

My Lord asked me of whom I had learnt.—I named my first master, tho' indeed, I was principally indebted to Mr. Seymount, for the little taste I had to boast of. I did not, however, mention *him*.

"But what master," said my Lord, "could teach you, Miss Osgood, without being inspired with the tenderest

of

of all passions, while you was listening to his lessons?"

I was not willing to put a stop to a conversation which gave me pleasure, by taking every compliment paid to me *seriously*, and therefore endeavoured, in the best manner I could, to appear unaffected by them.

Mr. Hyam observing my apparent indifference, cried, "You are in the right, Miss Osgood not to mind what these young fellows say: they cannot, possibly, I believe, speak to women, upon the commonest subjects, without gallantry."

"Why are we young fellows," replied my Lord, with a smile, "the only gallant people? Do not *you*, Hyam, sometimes say fine things to fine women? Ay, you do, but with not half the meaning with which I have just spoken."

"I don't know what *your* meaning is my Lord," anſwered Mr. Hyam, rather ſurlily I thought, "but this I know, you cannot, ought not, to ſpeak with any meaning *here*."

The emphaſis laid on the word *here*, made me colour, tho' I was not ſure I was any way concerned in the ſpeech which had occaſioned it. My colour was not rendered fainter by my Lord's behaviour, who fixed his eyes on my face with a kind of anxiety which ſurprized, and which alſo touched me.

"Why am I ſo much affected by his Lordſhip's carriage?"—ſaid I to myſelf.

My Lord was ſilent during the remainder of the time he ſtaid. I ſeemed to be buſy with my pencil—Mr. Hyam looked at us both, alternately, and

then,

then, taking my Lord by the arm, ſaid, "Come, we do but hinder her."

"I beg pardon," replied my Lord, with a half ſigh—adding, with a reſpectful earneſtneſs, "I hope, Miſs Oſgood, I have not been an intruder to day: I hope you will, now and then, permit me to make myſelf happy by calling upon you."

A ſmile, accompanied with a motion of my head, while I ſat, was the only anſwer I made; and I proceeded towards the finiſhing of my drawing with more alacrity than ever. Lord Woodford's compliments—tho' I was not ſo weak as to reckon upon them—were extremely pleaſing, and doubly pleaſing, becauſe I fancied, from the natural ſeriouſneſs of his aſpect, that he had not been accuſtomed to make them to every bo-

dy.—Mr. Seymount's attachment to me had engaged my attention; as it flattered my vanity, it alſo awakened my gratitude. I imagined that the man who could bring himſelf to appear in a degrading light for my ſake, muſt be ſeriouſly and violently in love with me: I could not, therefore, help feeling ſenſations in his favour; eſpecially when I thought my mother too ſevere, indeed rather rude to him: I wiſhed to ſoften her harſhneſs into a grateful kind of civility for his having diſtinguiſhed me: and if ſhe *had* behaved in a proper manner to him, time might have ripened, his friendſhip into love.—Something like eſteem I certainly began to feel for *him*, after having been intereſted in his ſafety from humanity. But different emotions were excited in me by Lord Woodford, when he made his firſt viſit; there was a ſolidity

a solidity and an air of sincerity in his behaviour which convinced me that he had not been used to lavish his compliments upon every pretty girl he met with: his compliments, therefore, to me were particularly agreeable.—There was also a taste in his expressions, if I may say so, which heightened the value of them. Seymount appeared to be a young fellow, romantically struck with a pretty face which he had never seen before, which face he desired to see again, as much out of curiosity as admiration—Lord Woodford, on the other hand, rather seemed to wish that he had not been pleased at the sight of me, and while he paid me the compliment of desiring leave to visit me again, looked as if his heart had no share in it.

Mr. Hyam came twice, afterwards, without him; he did not even mention

him, and it would have been improper in *me*, you know, to have enquired about him.

Mr. Hyam took home his drawing, after having paid me ſix guineas, and ordered another.

As this way of getting a little money was pleaſant as well as profitable, I was quite ſatisfied with it, and to make Mrs. Burdet equally ſo, I gave her half my gains; but ſhe was one of thoſe women who are troubled with an inquiſitive diſpoſition, ſhe was, therefore, but *half* contented with her ſhare of my profits; the ſtrong deſire which ſhe had to know who Lord Woodford was, made her very reſtleſs.—I was full as ignorant about him as ſhe herſelf was, being only acquainted with his title, and, conſequently, had it not in my power to gratify her curioſity.

In about a week afterwards, Lord Woodford

Woodford made his ſecond appearance, and alone. A charming ſmile overſpread his fine face as he approached. I am pretty ſure I ſmiled in return, for I felt a pleaſure at the ſight of him, which I can neither define nor deſcribe. A bluſh alſo accompanied my ſmile, as my Lord, inſtantly re aſſuming his uſual ſerioufneſs of aſpect, drew back a little, and ſaid, "Have I taken an unſeaſonable hour to wait on you, Miſs Oſgood?"

"Not at all my Lord," replied I, with a readineſs at which I was, myſelf, ſurpriſed, and offered him a chair.

He ſat down, after having articulated a compliment which politeneſs made rather neceſſary, and it was delivered with inimitable grace.

We were then both ſilent for ſome time: the ſilence, on *my* ſide was, I muſt own, awkward, and painful; I,

therefore, rose, and fetched my last drawing, about which Mr. Hyam had employed me, and asked his Lordship's opinion of it, intreating him at the same time, to do me the favour to correct any fault he might discover in it.

"It is charming," said he, looking first at me, and then at the drawing; "there is not a single fault discoverable; but I could wish—"

"For what, my Lord," cried I, eagerly interrupting him; "there is certainly some defect in it. You are so obliging as to be sorry to point out my mistakes, but you may be of infinite service to me by the detection of them. —I very much wish to be improved by your Lordship's judgment."

My Lord looked at me, attentively, while I spoke: then suddenly turned from me for a moment.

Imagining

Imagining that I had been guilty of a capital error, I felt a dejection not to be expressed, but it forced me to repeat my request.

Returning the drawing to me, he said, "There is no fault in it: you have been only censurable," added he, surveying me with exquisite anxiety, "for drawing at all."

The anxiety strongly marked in his Lordship's countenance, increased mine.

"How, my Lord," cried I, frightened, and abashed, "Have I improperly employed myself in drawing those plants?"

"Certainly no," replied he, earnestly: "nobody, I will affirm, nobody can execute them in a more elegant, in a more masterly manner; but yet I wish you was not obliged to do any."

I could not comprehend his Lordship's meaning:

meaning: I was ſurprized at ſuch a ſpeech; it hurt me: I felt very uneaſy on having one part of my conduct diſapproved of by ſo amiable a man; by a man whom I beheld with the eyes of partiality. I, therefore, with a ſerious, a ſolemn face indeed, haſtened to exculpate myſelf from any impropriety, by telling his lordſhip, "that as I was neceſſitated to follow ſome employment to procure a ſubſiſtence, I thought drawing, having been often flattered for the execution of my performances by people of taſte, as eligible as any other buſineſs." My Lord gazed at me, with a tenderneſs in his eyes, ſighed, and exclaimed, "Cruel neceſſity!—But how happened it —Pardon me, Miſs Oſgood—how happened it that you, with ſuch extraordinary talents, ſhould be compelled to take this method to ſubſiſt yourſelf?—

Believe

Believe me, madam, it pains me to be so inquisitive, yet it pains me still more to remain incapable of serving you through ignorance."

He looked at that moment, as if he really suffered from having wounded my delicacy by his curiosity; and the refinement of his behaviour having raised him higher in my esteem than he was before, I could not help feeling a desire to give him the information he seemed to wish for so ardently; not in the least considering whether I should act discreetly or imprudently by opening my heart freely to a man of whom I knew so little; but a sudden and irresistible impulse prompted me to acquaint him with my situation.—I related all that had passed concerning Sir Thomas, and waited with much impatience to hear his sentiments about my intelligence.

Several

Several times he viewed me with the greatest attention, and when I ceased to speak, his eyes were so rivetted on me, with tenderness and admiration in them, that I was, I confess, more pleased than disconcerted; tho' I felt some confusion as well as pleasure.

For a few moments he sat silent, then lifting up his hands and eyes, "Good God!" said he eagerly, "to what dangers has not, that charming innocence, that delighful simplicity been exposed! but, dear, amiable Fanny," continued he, "what difficulties may you not, still have to encounter? you will, doubtless, by your good sense, and by your virtue, be able to surmount them; your discretion, which has hitherto saved you from the snares spread against you, will not, I trust, forsake you upon any future emergency; but your present situation is extremely hazardous:

hazardous: you are not, in my opinion, ſecure from danger a ſingle moment."

"No my Lord?" replied I, exceſſively alarmed; "am I dangerouſly ſituated here?—You think, then, that either Sir Thomas, or my mother has found me out."

"I am quite ignorant with regard to them both," anſwered he, with more anxiety in his countenance than had yet appeared in it, "but where is the man who will ſuffer ſuch a perſon, and ſuch a mind, to be buried in obſcurity? they ought not indeed to be ſo buried.—Good Heavens! why is there not——however *I* will protect you from every inſult: I will be your ſincere, your permanent friend: you have behaved with ſo charming a frankneſs, and have diſcovered ſo excellent a heart, that I am determined to give you all the aſſiſtance in my power, and in a manner too at which

you

you ſhall not be offended.—I cannot any longer permit myſelf to ſee you thus labouring for a ſubſiſtence, a wretched ſubſiſtence at beſt: I cannot ſee you live expoſed to the ſight, to the inſolent carriage of every idle coxcomb: if you remain here you may be dragged away by the woman whom you call your mother —how unworthy of that appellation!— and forced into the arms of that deteſtable old fellow.—My blood freezes at the thought."

In this energetic ſtrain, did he deliver himſelf, and indeed the latter part of his ſpeech made *my* blood run cold.—But while I ſhuddered at the danger to which I was expoſed, and which he had repreſented in lively colours, I received an inexpreſſible ſatisfaction on ſeeing him ſo much affected by my unfortunate condition: *that* ſatisfaction was, no doubt, ſtrongly

ſtrongly viſible in my eyes, into which tears ſoon ruſhed, and I replied in melancholy accents, "What muſt I do then, my Lord?"

"Will you conſent to be adviſed by me?" ſaid he, eagerly.

Before I could anſwer he proceeded—"Will you conſent to let me remove you from this woman, who is, unqueſtionably, forming ſome deſign againſt you?—Will you not truſt yourſelf with *me*, Fanny?" added he, in a ſoftened, in the moſt perſuaſive tone.

I bluſhed, I looked down: unexperienced as I was, I felt the impropriety of this requeſt, and I—ſighed.

"You ſigh—you are ſilent," replied he preſſing my hand; "do you diſtruſt me? do you think me capable of injuring you, Miſs Oſgood?"

"I don't know, my Lord," anſwered I, after

I, after some hesitation, withdrawing my hand; "I would, willingly, continue to have a good opinion of your Lordship, and, therefore, I believe, I had better not trust you; I should be sorry to be deceived."

"How flattering is that dreaded sorrow!—how amiable your fears!—yet banish them, Fanny; not my own honour shall be dearer to me than yours; but you must remain here no longer without a friend, without a protector. Sir Thomas, or your mother, or a thousand other people may involve you in numberless difficulties, and destroy your peace."

"And to what other place can I go?" said I—"I know nobody: I have, hitherto, met with no interruption here, and I may, by leaving this house, fall into worse hands."

"I will

"I will take care of that," replied he; "I will secure you a retreat; I will furnish you with every thing to render it agreeable to you.—You shall be your own mistress, Fanny, you shall depend upon nobody's pleasure but your own: I will be the most submissive of your friends."

I could not help smiling to think of the satisfaction which he promised himself from his last words.—I shook my head, however, at his fine scheme—I thought it, indeed, a very pleasing one, yet I, at the same time, deemed it to be an impracticable one; because I knew that I had not money to live in the manner he mentioned; and I told him, between jest and earnest, "that when I had saved enough by my drawing, I should like an independent life extremely well."

"Talk no more of drawing," answer-

ed

red he; "it must not be; you may amuse yourself with your pencil in your little retreat, at your leisure hours, but on no account must you make your performances publick; they are too exquisitely finished to be exhibited to every common eye."

There is no saying how long his Lordship would have expatiated upon a subject in which he seemed to be very much interested, if Mr. Hyam had not, by his entrance, put a stop to a conversation which began to embarrass me. Tho' I knew not a great great deal of the world, I was not quite so ignorant as to suppose that Lord Woodford, or any other Lord would support me for nothing: I was, however, inexperienced enough not to be shocked at his Lordship's offer: I neither started like a prude, nor put on the serious, considerate countenance of a discreet

woman,

woman, the propriety of whoſe behaviour had never been diſputed.—I liſtened to him with chearfulneſs; with ſmiles. In ſhort, I was aſtoniſhed to find a man of my Lord's charming underſtanding and perſon, taſte and ſenſibility, intereſted about ſuch a poor, little, inſignificant girl as myſelf.—Yet, flattered as I was by the attentions of ſuch a man, I reſolved not to cloſe with his generous propoſal; I ſhould have corrected myſelf for the pleaſure which I received from it, but my heart was touched by it.

The interruption occaſioned by Mr. Hyam to our *tête a-tête*, was very ſeaſonable for *me*: my Lord was, viſibly, diſpleaſed with it, and ſoon afterwards, took his leave.

When he was gone, Mr. Hyam ſaid, "he fancied my Lord had been making love to me."

"No,

"No, indeed, my good Sir," answered I, blushing; "I wonder why you think so."

"Because he is a man of taste," replied he, "and because you have beauty: you see mine is a very natural conclusion; but take care, and do not be too ready to listen to him; continue to be a good girl, and mind your business; by and by you may meet with a proper man to give your heart to."

This reply heightened the colour in my cheeks, and increased the agitation which I felt on the mention of my Lord.

When Mr. Hyam left me to my own reflections, his Lordship's late behaviour too much engaged my thoughts.—While I sat considering what steps to take to prevent them from dwelling upon one object—and *such* an object—Mrs. Burdet came into my room.

Immediately

Immediately, upon her entrance, she began to ask me a great many impertinent questions, both about me, and concerning my Lord.—she was also exceedingly inquisitive about my future plan of life. My answers to her questions were short and evasive—I really had not absolutely determined what to do, and after what I had observed in her carriage, I had no inducement to communicate my designs to her.

She looked at me with a penetrating, and with a malignant eye; at least I fancied so, but Mr. Hyam's civilities, and particularly Lord Woodford's most friendly offers—tho' I had resolved not to accept of them—made me sufficiently easy, and I returned to my pencil without troubling myself about her.

The next day, and the two following days, Lord Woodford came and sat by me while I finished the drawing, admi-

ring it extremely, but persuading me to draw, for the future, only for amusement. He talked to me in raptures of the little retreat which he had found out for me. I changed the conversation several times—My Lord was perhaps sorry to be turned from his favourite topic, but I lost nothing by endeavouring to introduce new subjects, for he conversed upon every subject in a manner entertaining beyond expression. So delighted was I with his conversible powers, that my heart bounded with joy at his approach, and sunk within me at his departure. Charmed with the melody of his tongue, I listened to it without regarding Mr. Hyam's admonitions: I did not give myself the trouble to consider how indiscreet my conduct might be, I almost forgot every thing but the transporting

satisfaction

ſatisfaction ſeſulting from his dear ſociety.

On the evening of the fourth day, after the ſtriking proof I had received of Mrs. Burder's inquiſitive diſpoſition, while I was ſitting alone, ruminating on what had happened to me, the maid came, hurrying to me, and cried, "Oh Miſs, my miſtreſs has had a ſad fall in croſſing the next ſtreet, and has been carried into Mr. Ball's:—She has ſent for me, and begs you would juſt ſtep along with me, and ſee her.

As I had often heard them talk of Ball the baker, I, naturally, ſuppoſed that the girl's intelligence was true, tho' I remember I made an objection with regard to leaving the houſe: however, being preſſed to go, I threw my cloak over my ſhoulders, and followed her: It was almoſt dark.

Just as I had got about half the length of the street, which was a private one, a man, overtaking me, seized my hand, and cried, "This way, this way;" and, before I could recover my hand I found myself surrounded, lifted up, and put into a coach—The windows of it were instantly drawn up by a person within, who held me fast in spite of all my screaming, and struggling to get loose.

The coach drove very briskly, and as there was no light, I could not possibly see by whom I was kept down on my seat. I concluded, indeed, that Sir Thomas, or somebody employed by him, was the person, and was exceedingly terrified. I also imagined, and trembled at the thought, that I should be carried out of town, and so closely confined as to have no hopes of escaping from my prison. I, therefore, redoubled my cries, in order

to

to induce ſomebody paſſing by, touched with compaſſion, as well as prompted by curioſity, to ſtop the coach, before it was out of London, imagining that there would be fewer paſſengers upon any of the roads about it, and that I ſhould, conſequently, ſtand the leſs chance to make any creature come to my aſſiſtance.

The louder I cried, the more pains did thoſe who guarded me take to ſtop my mouth. At laſt, my ſtrength became ſo much exhauſted that I had hardly power to ſpeak. As ſoon as I found that the coach was off the pavement, I looked upon myſelf as devoted to deſtruction.—I ſat almoſt motionleſs: only, now and then, pouring forth a prayer from my diſtreſſed heart, to the Almighty, for his protection.

While I was thus ſituated, a great noiſe, occaſioned by the trampling of

horſes, and the rolling of a carriage, tempted me to try once more the utmoſt efforts of my voice. I ſcreamed: I ſhrieked.

At that inſtant our coach was ſtopped; the door was forced open, and I beheld, by the blaze of the flambeaux, Lord Woodford, attended by ſeveral ſervants. He held out his arms; I ſcreamed for joy, and threw myſelf into them, ſcarce able to breathe, and agitated with a thouſand conflicting emotions. He conveyed me, he rather flew with me to his poſt-chaiſe and four, which was the carriage I had heard, ſeated me in it, and placed himſelf by my ſide:—After having ſpoken a few words to his people, he drew up the glaſs, and we ſet off full gallop.—He then turned to me, whom he ſtill ſupported, for I was ſo overpowered with terror, ſurprize and joy, that I was quite inca-

pable

pable of ſpeaking, and in the tendereſt accents, aſked me, "how I felt myſelf."—He told me, in the ſame accents, "that he hoped I had been only frightened by the infamous treatment I had met with, and begged me to make myſelf perfectly eaſy; aſſuring me that no other harm ſhould diſtreſs me, and that I might depend upon his doing every thing in the moſt reſpectful manner, on *his* part, to make my life agreeable to me."

I firſt endeavoured to thank him with a deep ſigh, while he affectionately preſſed my hands in his, and aſked me if he ſhould ſtop to give me an opportunity to take ſome refreſhment. "I am very much afraid," added he, with the kindeſt looks, "that you are ill."

I anſwered, "By no means—I have only been exceſſively terrified: but I return my

ſincereſt

sincerest thanks to Heaven for having sent me a deliverer, on whose honour I may rely."

"You may, indeed, rely on it" answered he; "I will sooner perish than injure you—Place some confidence in me, Miss Osgood; you will not find yourself deceived."

I thanked him, and became more and more satisfied with my situation. The truth is, I loved Lord Woodford to a degree not to be described; I was very sensible, however, that I could not have been in *that* situation with him, with any discretion, if the extraordinary and unforseen event, above-mentioned, had not thrown me into it. As I was *so* situated, I could not help indulging the sensations I felt in his Lordship's company—His extreme solicitude on my account, his tender enquiries after my

health,

health, and every gentle pressure of his hand, gave my young heart, naturally full of sensibility, and now warmed with gratitude, transports inconceivable. It was my duty, I thought, to appear grateful, but I also imagined I could not, discreetly, let my lover see my feelings in his favour. Yet I was a poor dissembler. I was always an enemy to deceit. I should have gloried in avowing *those* feelings for my Lord, if our stations in life had not been so widely different: when I reflected upon *that* difference, I believed it absolutely necessary to conceal my affection for him.—I will frankly own, however, that by endeavouring to behave with the strictest prudence upon the occasion, I did no small violence to my inclination.

Lord Woodford plainly perceived the struggles I endured between love and modesty: he seemed to be highly pleased

with them, and his increasing attentions were the most flattering ones in the world.

As soon as I had a little recovered my spirits, I intreated him to tell me how he came to know that I was in any danger.

"I could not," replied he, "think of going to an appointment I had this evening, till I had first called on you, so strong was my desire to see you, a desire which I could not, possibly, conquer. Accordingly, I ordered my chariot to stop at Mrs. Burdet's door. Immediately on my arrival I saw the maid in a great fright, and she informed me that somebody had carried you away in a coach.—As soon as the girl had given me the best directions in her power with regard to the *route* which the coach took, I ordered my coachman to follow it as fast as possible, and dispatched one of my fellows home to send a post-

post-chaise and four after me with the utmost expedition. The moment we were off the stones I stept into my chaise, and by so doing, fortunately overtook the carriage into which you had been forced, time enough to be serviceable to you. As no resistance was made, I fancied that the people with you were not apprehensive of any friend's coming to your assistance."

"And whither are we now going, my Lord?" said I, after having thanked him for flying to my rescue.

"To a small house, a few miles out of town," replied he, "of which I have long wished to see you mistress, and in which you will, I hope, meet with every thing agreeable to you. You will find servants, and a carriage entirely at your command; and you will receive, every quarter, a sum sufficient to support the

appearance to which you are, by your uncommon merit, fairly entitled."

"I have a thousand thanks to return to you, my Lord," said I, blushing, and looking down, "a thousand thanks for this most generous behaviour: but you overwhelm me with your liberality: I cannot ever hope to make suitable acknowledgements."

"Shall I not be favoured with your friendship?" said he, eargerly "and your esteem—if you think me worthy of it? and shall I not then be overpaid?"

"But women of character, my Lord, are not, usually supported in this manner by gentlemen: and if, by this step, I lose my reputation, I shall be unworthy—however conscious I may be of my own innocence—of your future protection."

"Unworthy

"Unworthy?—Impossible! you cannot be unworthy."

"I may not, perhaps, in *your* opinion, be undeserving," replied I, "because you are the most generous of men; but if the world thinks ill of me, I shall not reckon myself worthy of your esteem: a woman who is in the least suspected, cannot be a spotless character, and such a character alone can merit your Lordship's regard."

"As to absolute perfection, a perfect man and a perfect woman, would be unnatural beings, and consequently disagreeable ones."

"No, surely, my Lord; the less imperfect we are, the more agreeable I imagine, we shall be."

"I shall get nothing, I see," said he, with an enchanting smile, "by disputing with you upon this subject; suffer me, however,

however, my dear Fanny, to tell you that as we have, most of us, a partiality for ourselves, we do not readily take to those whose merit is superior to our own; we are more inclined to love those who have a few amiable weaknesses, which calling for our compassion, naturally excite our tenderness and affection."

"What you say, my Lord," answered I eargerly, "may possibly be true: but the weaknesses of our fellow-creatures cannot raise our esteem for them: it is, undoubtedly, pleasing to be loved for our behaviour, but it is more laudable, I think, to act in such a manner as to be esteemed."

"What a charming, what a just distinction! Yet give me leave to say, that I have not so much ambition to be esteemed, as to be loved by the mistress of my heart."

I repeated

I repeated my former reply.

My Lord looked ſerious.—"You know not," ſaid he, with a ſigh, "what it is to be inſpired with the moſt delightful of all paſſions."

The converſation was now, I thought, growing too particular, I, therefore, turned it, "by aſking him, how long it would be before we ſtopped."

"This moment, if you pleaſe," ſaid my Lord —"Every wiſh of your heart, if you will but diſcloſe it, and if you are ſilent, I will endeavour to read it in your lovely eyes, ſhall be complied with, inſtantly complied with."

I thanked him, more with bluſhes, than with words, "I only aſked out of an idle curioſity," added I; "let me deſire your Lordſhip not to retard the journey a minute on *my* account."

We arrived, at length, at a pretty little

tle house, *embosomed*—I may say, in a grove of trees.

My Lord conducted me into it, and presented a couple of female servants to me, and a lad also in a genteel livery: he ordered them all to look on me as their mistress.

"I will sup with you to night, Miss Osgood," said my Lord, speaking aloud, "if you will permit me to give myself that pleasure, and then retire to my own house, which is about half a mile distant from hence."

I assented: how could I do otherwise?

As soon as we were seated in the parlour, he told me that he had formed a plan which would secure my character from calumny, and make every thing easy; adding, that he hoped it would meet with *my* approbation.

"You cannot, you are sensible, Miss Osgood,"

Osgood," continued he, "return to your mother, after the injurious treatment which you have received from her, and you have no other relation: only condescend to chuse *me* for your guardian: I have a legal right to protect you: all enquiries into your fortune, and affairs, will be to no purpose, when I am trusted with every thing relating to you. —The moment my dear Fanny—(seeing me look serious) the very moment I abuse the confidence you place in me, cast me from you for ever.—You will then be as much at liberty to act agreeably to your inclination as you are now: but I flatter myself that you cannot chuse a man more sincerely devoted to your service than I am."

I blushed, and bowed my grateful acknowledgements. I was not so ignorant of the world, as not to see that my

Lord,

Lord, under the specious title of a guardian, might take great liberties with me, but I thought he had found out a genteel way (the only decent one, indeed which he could have proposed) to provide for me without injuring my reputation: and, situated as I then was, it was incumbent on me, I fancied, to view things in the most favourable light; to say nothing of the strong propensity I felt to like whatever my Lord said or did.

When he had explained himself so far, he asked me, "if it would not be agreeable to me to walk up stairs, and see the apartments he had ventured to chuse for me."

I smiled approbation. He then rang the bell, and bade Nanny, the upper maid servant, attend me. She conducted me into a very pleasant bed-

chamber,

chamber, and dreſſing-room, elegantly furniſhed with chintz, and decorated with pictures, glaſſes, cabinets, and china: the reſt of the houſe, tho' a ſmall one, was ornamented in the ſame pleaſing manner, taſte having been conſulted rather than magnificence.

When I returned to the parlour, my Lord made a number of apologies becauſe the commodes and cabinets were not yet filled with the neceſſary appendixes to the toilet: "But I could not tell when I ſhould be able to prevail on you to ſettle here," added he; "and I imagined that you would be more pleaſed to regulate every thing about your dreſs yourſelf. You have, therefore, Miſs Oſgood—preſenting a hundred pound bank-note to me—nothing to do but to ſend your orders to the principal warehouſes

houses in London, from which you may be immediately accommodated."

I felt my face glow like crimson: I would have returned the note, but my Lord instantly refused taking it "My dear Fanny," said he, "you must only look upon this as a part of your fortune."

Oppressed with favours thus, unable to reject them when offered in so charming a manner, still readier to oblige than to be obliged, and yet dreading, worse than death, the sacrifice of her virtue, even to the man on whom she doated—imagine you see a poor defenceless girl left quite alone, with nothing but the natural goodness of her heart, a heart uncorrupted by vice, yet full of sensibility, to enable her to behave with a proper regard to her character in a very trying situation.

My Lord perceived my embarrassment:

ment: he felt for my confusion, and with a delicacy peculiar to himself, with a vivacity which rendered him irresistible, immediately turned the conversation upon the most entertaining subjects.

Taking out his watch, on a sudden he started up, and asked me, "If I would give him leave to assist me in doing the honours of my table."

I replied with a smile, "that he would give me particular pleasure by so doing."

He then flew to the bell, when Tom —the lad abovementioned, came in— he said to him—"Miss Osgood would have supper."

In ten minutes, being told that it was upon table, he led me into the other parlour, seated me at the head of the table, and begged me to help him, as he was extremely hungry.

I felt, at first, a little awkward in the new part I was to act; but with so elegant,

gant, and ſo charming an inſtructor, I ſoon caught all the ſuperficial forms of good breeding.

My Lord had a remarkable eaſe in his carriage, and trifled in the moſt agreeable manner in the world; yet was he ſtill more enchanting when he converſed ſeriouſly upon uſeful, as well as amuſing topics: to every topic his voice, his looks, his behaviour, were all happily ſuited, and it was impoſſible not to liſten to him with the ſtricteſt attention, whenever he opened his lips. There was, at the ſame time, ſo much modeſty in his air, and ſo much humility in his features, that not the ſmalleſt ſtreak of vanity was diſcoverable in them.

With ſuch a man, my dear Maria, *inſenſibility* herſelf would have been tranſported.—What woman could have reſiſted ſuch a man? Lord Woodford was very ſoon, indeed, in poſſeſſion of my

heart;

heart; I only wished that it had been more worthy of his acceptance.

We lived very rationally together, and the time flew away with delightful rapidity. My Lord slept at his own house, but generally spent the whole day—always the greatest part of it—with *me*.—He, commonly, came to breakfast; sometimes a couple of hours afterwards. When the weather was favourable, we walked in a beautiful shrubbery, on the other side of a fine lawn, which fronted my elegant little mansion. Hither my Lord, observing my taste for flowers and gardening, sent all kinds of curious plants, and took an infinite deal of pleasure in seeing me range them agreeably to their several colours.

At other times, my drawing, and my needle engaged my attention, and while I was employed, my

Lord

Lord either read or chatted to me.— I had learnt musick, but not of one of the best masters: and as my taste for drawing had always been predominant, I had not attended to my lessons sufficiently to make any great progress.

My Lord, sitting by me, one day while I was at work, said, "As your voice is extremely sweet, Fanny, you must, I imagine, sing well; I never heard you, but I will venture to say that I should be charmed with your vocal performances."

"I have not applied to musick, my Lord, so closely as I should have done," answered I, "but I will practise, if I shall give you the least pleasure by so doing."

He thanked me in a manner excessively polite, as if I had conferred the greatest favour on him, and immediately, sent to his house for a Harpsichord, telling

telling me, at the ſame time, that he was extravagantly fond of muſick, and that he would ſend for an organ if I liked the inſtrument.

This was too conſiderable a temptation to be reſiſted, tho' I felt ſufficient ſatisfaction by accommodating myſelf to *his* taſte.—Accordingly, he went to London on purpoſe to chuſe an organ for me, and he very ſoon taught me to touch it in a maſterly way. Few people played with more judgment than himſelf: and ſometimes he accompanied me with his violencello, with ſuch bewitching tones, that he made me eager to exert all my powers.—Yet he would never ſit long, intently, to any of my employments: he contrived to vary them for me, and ſeemed very ſtudious to prevent my wiſhing for any other companion.—Bleſſed with *his* converſation, I ſhould indeed,

have discovered the most deplorable want of taste, if I had sighed for the company of any other man. I was thoroughly contented with *his* society.

Sometimes, also, I rode out with him in his chaise. Whenever we came to a spot particularly pleasant, we quitted the chaise, and walked. Now and then we dined, and drank tea at his house; and strolled in the park and gardens.—In the evening, he brought me home.—In all this continued intimacy never did I hear Lord Woodford utter a syllable which was unfit for my ears; never did he take any unbecoming liberties.—He behaved only as an affectionate brother would have behaved to a sister, for whom he had the sincerest regard.—He often took hold of my hand, indeed, and often, while we were walking together, put my arm under his: yet with all his *tenderness*,

with

with all his respectful silence, his eyes spoke the tenderest language; and he was, apparently, the most impassioned lover, as well as the truest and most disinterested friend.—I was, myself, no less tender, but I was upon my guard: yet as my mind opened, and as I acquired new ideas from the books recommended to my perusal, and from the improving conversations occasioned by them, I became unhappy.

I have already told you, my dear Maria, that I loved Lord Woodford extremely. I very soon found that a separation from him would be a blow too heavy for me to bear. The apprehension of such a blow tormented me day and night. In vain did I endeavour to administer consolation to myself by the tenderness of my Lord's behaviour, which left me no room to question his affection for

me. I was thoroughly assured, painfully certain, that his rank, and his connections, would be insuperable bars against his union with *me*; and when I reflected upon the probability of his marrying another woman, I was almost deprived of my reason.—I strove, it is true, to prepare my mind for such an event, but I strove in vain. If my Lord happened to be absent from me longer than usual, the emotions which I felt forcibly convinced me that life would not be desirable without his society.—Often did I wish, in my moments of despondence, that I had never known him, as fortune had, seemingly, prohibited an honourable alliance between us; but more frequently did I, when looking at his intelligent eyes, or listening to his melodious accents, bless the hour which first brought me acquainted with him.

While

While we were airing, one day, upon a common, a few miles diſtant from my Lord's houſe, a gentleman paſſed us on horſeback, ſo ſtrongly reſembling Mr. Seymount, that a number of old ideas ruſhed into my mind, and I changed colour: not that I had ever really loved Seymount, I had only felt gratitude for him, but the remembrance of my mother's ſtrange and cruel treatment, occaſioned by the ſight of him, affected me ſo powerfully that I could not conceal the agitation into which my ſpirits were thrown.

The ſudden change in my countenance was inſtantly perceived by Lord Woodford. He looked at me, as if he would have penetrated into my ſoul, and aſked me if I was ill, if any thing had frightened me.

"I thought I ſaw Mr. Seymount paſs by juſt now," ſaid I, very innocently, as

I had no intention to conceal the most secret movements of my heart.

"Mr. Seymount?" replied my Lord, starting at the name. "Do you know Mr. Seymount then?" added he, in some disorder.

"I once knew a gentleman of that name," replied I, ready to tremble, so violent were my emotions on seeing my Lord so much agitated.

My Lord imagining that those emotions had been occasioned by the sight of the gentleman who had passed us, said, "Don't be alarmed Miss Osgood: the person you saw was not Mr. Seymount, but he is very like him; however, pray be so kind as to inform me where you became acquainted with Mr. Seymount."

As I plainly perceived that my Lord interested himself about the affair, and appeared very anxious, I told him honestly

nestly every thing relating to my acquaintance with Mr. Seymount, not omitting his stratagem to have interviews with me in the character of a lover, undiscovered by my mother.

My Lord was almost breathless while I spoke, so attentive was he to my little narrative, and hardly did he give me time to conclude it.

"And you loved this Seymount?" cried, he hastily.

"No, indeed, my Lord.—I only felt gratitude for him."

"Gratitude?" answered he, repeating the word—"gratitude is nearly allied to a softer passion."

He stopped: he looked tenderly on me, and sighed: then, instantly frowning, he turned away his face, and looked out at the opposite window till we came home.

This ſudden indifference pained me. I could not tell how to bear it, not being conſcious of having deſerved it. After having ſo minutely, and ſo ſincerely related every thing I knew concerning Seymount, I thought my ſincerity would have merited applauſe: little did I imagine that it would have excited diſapprobation.

My Lord grew, at laſt, ſo penſive, and diſcontented, that I really began to fear I had, by ſome inadvertencies, offended him, and I could not help feeling myſelf ſeriouſly afflicted. Tears dimmed my eyes, and I could hardly reſtrain myſelf from weeping aloud.

My Lord, ſtill attentive to me, ſtill obſerving every look and motion, aſked me, more than once, if I was indiſpoſed. I anſwered in the negative.

"Why then are you ſo ſtrangely dejected?

ted?—But I remember you have, undoubtedly, met with a great disappointment to-day, and therefore, you are to be pitied"—added he, with a heavy sigh.

"What disappointment my Lord?" replied I, with an eager anxiety; "I expected nothing,—I have nothing to expect."

The moment these words were out of my mouth, I wished to recall them.—I coloured like scarlet: I hung my head, and trembled lest my Lord should misconstrue them; but he did not: however, tho' he mistook my meaning, he, unfortunately for me, put a construction upon my words which I had not apprehended.

With much apparent disatisfaction, he replied, but not immediately—"If he was so deeply in love as you say, time

may, possibly, work out something in your favour."

"I don't understand you, my Lord," said I, quite confused.

"No, madam?"—looking very serious; "cannot you hope that time may put Mr. Seymount into a situation to demand the favour of your hand?"

"Mr. Seymount?" exclaimed I, hastily—"I entertain no hopes of Mr. Seymount, my Lord; I never once thought about him."—Again my colour came—I threw down my eyes; my Lord's brightened exceedingly. A charming smile enlivened his fine features.

"Not think of Seymount?" said he, seizing my hand, in a transport; "did you not think of him, my dearest girl?—How egregiously have I been mistaken! But tell me, then," continued he, pressing my hand, "tell me, Fanny, of whom did you think?"

I was

I was now obliged to be silent: I could not with propriety, declare my real sentiments, and I scorned to utter falsehoods:—I therefore, said nothing; but as my Lord sat hanging over me, and urging me to acquaint him with my secret thoughts, I, at last, ventured to look up in his face:—What he saw in mine I cannot tell, but, drawing my hand gently to his lips, he softly articulated, "Angelic girl!" and then, as if apprehensive of having said too much, let my hand drop, and averted his face. I, ready to faint, with the agitation which so tender a scene had produced, rose, and walked to the window—There a shower of tears instantly relieved my full heart. My back was towards him, but I could not, with all the efforts in my power, stifle the sighs, sighs arising from excessive satisfaction,

which iſſued from my boſom; for I was throughly perſuaded that I was beloved, and that prudential motives only prevented my Lord from telling me ſo in the tendereſt terms.

My ſighs alarmed him; he hurried to me; he caught my hand again—I turned away my eyes, but he ſaw the tears roll down my cheeks.

With an impaſſioned look, and with a tremulous voice, he cried, "Gracious Heaven! what do I behold? what means theſe tears?"

I broke from him, immediately: I dared not to truſt myſelf with him, nor yet could I bear to give pain to that heart, which had juſt afforded me ſo much pleaſure.—I haſtened out of the room, after having ſaid, "Pray excuſe me, my Lord, and do not aſk the reaſon of my departure, or enquire into the

cauſe

cauſe of my tears: but be aſſured, that they flow from ſenſations too pleaſing to be expreſſed."

With theſe words I ran up into my own apartment, and ſtaid in it till ſupper was upon table, tho' I heard him twice ſay, "Fanny, my deareſt Fanny," with a loud, and imploring voice.

When I came down, we were both more compoſed. My Lord's behaviour was delicately affectionate. The evening flew away, tho' neither of us proceeded to an explanation of what had paſſed.—Never had my Lord appeared to me in ſo engaging a light; innumerable were his winning ways, and it is impoſſible to deſcribe the pains he took to render himſelf captivating.

The next day, tho' he was not leſs ſolicitous to pleaſe, he appeared far leſs happy; and as my happineſs hung, in a manner,

ner, upon his lips, whenever he was not chearful, I was, of course, dejected.

To increase my dejection, he told me, that he should, shortly, be confined to his own house with company.—"It will not be in my power to see you so frequently as I have done, Fanny," added he, "but I shall ever think of you with the highest satisfaction, and sincerely regret the loss of your conversation."

I bowed; but I felt very unhappy: accustomed as I had been to see him every day, and all the day, I could not hear of his intended absence from me, without being deeply touched; yet as I had so lately discovered, tho' involuntarily, to what a degree my heart doated on him, I was as much as possible upon my guard, lest any improper emotions should be visible. My Lord, I thought,

seemed equally studious to suppress every affecting sensation.

When he went away at his usual hour, he did not particularly take leave of me; he only looked earnestly at me, and sighed.—Overwhelmed with a softened tenderness I could scarce lift up my eyes.

How heavily did the moments move in his absence! For a week I bore it as well as I could: I hardly lived: I meerly existed. I then had time enough to reflect upon the wretched condition of a kept mistress: in that light I almost felt myself, as I had not a single acquaintance in the world—While I enjoyed my Lord's company, I did not, indeed, wish for any other company: more company would have been rather disagreeable to me; but, when *he* was gone, I most impatiently longed for somebody to speak to, somebody to whom I could speak of *him*;

the

the only man upon earth of whom I desired to talk.—If twenty persons had been in the house with me, I should not have ventured to mention him to one of them.

Having passed a melancholy week, without receiving a visit, or the slightest message from Lord Woodford, I concluded that he had judged it prudent to give me up; and that, not being willing to shock me by a formal adieu, he had separated himself from me for ever, in the least distressing manner he could think of.

Under the weight of this dispiriting apprehension, I could not, by any methods in my power, administer relief to my tortured mind: I could not help dwelling on those scenes which had yielded me the most exquisite delight: scenes, so *Fear* told me, never to return.—I lost my appetite—I could neither eat nor

sleep:

ſleep: I grew pale, thin, and became moſt truly a miſerable object.—Yet, tho' I had worked myſelf up to believe that my Lord would never ſee *me* again, I was ſtill anxiouſly deſirous of ſeeing *him*; and I could not refrain from wiſhing that if he *had* actually determined to forſake me, he would permit me to bid him a laſt farewel; even while I felt as if ſuch a farewel would prove fatal.—I wanted, indeed, to thank him for what he had done for me; I wanted to return the preſents which I had received from him; I wanted to leave the houſe in which he had placed me, and to go to ſome other ſpot, where I might follow my drawing; but then I conſidered how difficult it would be to find a retreat free from the intruſion of Sir Thomas, or of my mother.—I was, in ſhort, diſtracted with a multitude of alarm-

ing

ing doubts, and my unhappiness was doubled every day by the continued absence of my Lord.

Wearied, at length, with the most disheartening conjectures, I determined, one day, to take a walk towards Lord Woodford's house, in order to discover, if I could, what had kept him so long from me.

I set out, alone, upon this expedition, that nobody might suspect my design, which was not to go to my Lord's house, but only to wander about the *environs*, in hopes of getting a sight of him, tho' only at a distance.—My scheme was doubtless equally foolish and indiscreet, and I suffered sufficiently for it.

I walked very fast, so impatient was I to see my Lord; and when I came near his grounds, walked on till I was

ready

ready to drop, without perceiving a single creature.

At last a fine spaniel, of which my Lord was very fond, bounded along towards me.

My heart jumped at the sight of the little animal, which I had frequently caressed, as I expected to see his master soon following him.

I was not mistaken: my Lord, in a short time made his appearance: but good Heaven! how did I feel when I beheld him with a very elegant woman, who leaned on his arm carelessly. He seemed to be earnestly talking to her.—My feelings at that moment are not to be described.—Jealousy took immediate possession of my heart. I was no longer at a loss to know why my Lord had withdrawn himself from me: the woman before me had evidently been a successful rival.—She was in the same attitude in which I had

had often appeared, and he treated her in a manner which forced me to remember, with the most cutting grief, the happy hours which I had spent by his dear side. —However, tho' I was on the point of expiring with jealousy and sorrow, I wished to have a near view of them, to see if his Lordship's companion was as handsome as, at my first glance, I thought her to be.—I wished, also, to know if she was so perfectly to my Lord's taste, as to secure him more firmly than I had been capable of doing. I wanted to hear her voice; to hear her sentiments, but I wanted still more to hear what he said to her; yet I knew not how to gratify my curiosity, without risquing a discovery.—Besides, I was all over in such a trembling condition, that I could scarce support myself.

While I stood wavering, unable to determine

termine how to act, they advanced: It was a long walk they were in, between two rows of horſe cheſnuts: there was a quickſet hedge on one ſide of it, and alſo at the bottom, which had ſkreened me from their eyes. I had on a black cloak and hat, and was, therefore, not a very conſpicuous object. As they advanced, I ſtooped a little, and, peeping thro' the hedge, ſaw them both without any interruption. Over my Lord's countenance a melancholy ſerioufneſs was ſpread. The Lady's lovely face—for ſhe was very young and handſome—was enlivened by the moſt pleaſing ſmiles. She was indeed ſo very agreeable a figure, that I ſhrunk within myſelf.—I was not at all ſurprized at my Lord's attachment to ſo charming a creature.—Her dreſs, tho' only a morning one, was both elegant, and expenſive.

pensive. She eclipsed me as much in finery as she did in beauty.—I sighed deeply at the comparison which I could not help making in my own mind between us.—My Lord, indeed, frequently would have had me purchase rich clothes, but I always opposed him; yet my opposition did not hinder him from presenting several little ornaments, which I had determined to return to him before I saw the beautiful object which filled my heart with so much misery.

At length they turned about, to go towards the house, before I was able to get near enough to hear what they said. I stood till they were quite out of sight, after having strained my eyes to follow them.

As soon as I was deprived of the view of what had given me so much uneasi-

ness,

ness. I attempted to go home, but I was incapable of moving: I sunk down upon the grass, overwhelmed with despair, and should have fainted, I believe, if a violent shower of tears had not relieved me a little.

I rose the moment I was in a condition to walk, tho' I could, willingly, have staid all day and all night on that spot: but as I was uncertain about their coming out again, and afraid of being discovered by any of my Lord's people, I resolved to return to a house which I could no longer look upon as mine. I resolved, indeed, to leave it, when I had written a letter to my Lord, to acquaint him with my motives.—Yet, after all, what inducements have I to run away from a house in which my Lord has placed me, and in which he maintains me as a person under his care?

He

He had never told me that he had any view, in his behaviour to me, but to make me happy, and to secure me a decent provision; what business, then, have I to be offended, or grieved at his loving another woman? He has not directly, or indirectly, declared an inclination for me, and what reason have I to suppose he ever would? Not the least reason in the world: tho' I am sometimes encouraged to imagine, from his tender attentions and his generosity, that I am necessary to his happiness.—Do men usually behave to women whom they do not love, as my Lord did to me?—No, surely. — However, Lord Woodford is a very uncommon character.—He is benevolent, liberal and polite; he likes to chat with me, and to instruct me, but he certainly does not feel emotions in my favour, similar to those which he has

raised

raiſed in my fooliſh boſom.—He is the moſt diſintereſted, the moſt amiable of men, and I cannot but love him.—Nay, tho' he has, weary of my company, attached himſelf to another woman, I cannot diveſt myſelf of my partiality for him—But how blameable am I to give way to it? how exceedingly wrong will be my behaviour, if I continue under obligations to a generous man, for which I can make no returns —no returns conſiſtent with honour.—I have nothing but my affection to beſtow; take away my tenderneſs and I am poor indeed!

Such were my reflections while I walked homewards. As ſoon as I arrived, fatigued, faint, and ready to ſink to the ground, I took up my pen, and began a letter to my Lord. I thanked him in the warmeſt terms for the protection he had afforded me, for the generoſity with

 which

which he had diſtinguiſhed me: I told him that he had been too generous, that his liberality had oppreſſed me, that I had it not, that I never ſhould have it in my power to make the ſlighteſt return to the numberleſs favours he had conferred on me; adding that I was, therefore, determined to quit a ſphere of life to which I had not the ſmalleſt pretenſions, and to have recourſe to the employment from which I might reaſonably expect a decent ſubſiſtence.

I was then prevented from going on by a violent head ach—my eyes had a miſt before them: I was hot; extremely indiſpoſed all over, and obliged to lean my head upon the table.—I could no longer ſit upright.

Juſt at that inſtant, Nanny came in to aſk me what I would pleaſe to have for

for my dinner, as I had not given any orders before I went out.

"I thought, Madam," ſaid ſhe, "that you would have rung the bell before now."

Raiſing my head ſlowly, I told her, "that I could not eat a morſel."

The girl, being good natured, tried to perſuade me to have a little broth, or ſome white wine whey; but I refuſed every thing: I abhorred every kind of food: I abhorred myſelf particularly, for not having had attractions ſufficient to gain, and to keep Lord Woodford's heart. I was now certain that he had never felt the ſlighteſt inclination for me; and tho' I was very ſenſible that I ought to have eſteemed him a thouſand times the more for his diſintereſted generoſity, I could not bring myſelf to look upon him in the light I wiſhed, and I ſeriouſly

hated myſelf for my feelings.—But my head ſoon became ſo confuſed, that I could not reaſon about my ſenſations or my behaviour—I grew worſe and worſe, and was, in a ſhort time put to bed in a violent fever.

I lay, ſeveral days, incapable of thinking at all. The firſt object I beheld, when my ſenſes returned, was Lord Woodford ſitting by my bedſide, with looks expreſſive of the ſincereſt ſorrow, and holding my hand in his.

To tell you what I felt at that tranſporting moment is impoſſible. Lifting up my eyes, I looked earneſtly at my Lord, to be ſure that I was not miſtaken, and then cloſing them again, as even the little light in the room was too much for them, I fetched a deep ſigh, and preſſed his hand. He returned the preſſure with additional warmth, and with a

voice

voice which was melody to my ears, cried, "Fanny; my dearest Fanny, tell me, are you better? speak to me if you can; only one word of comfort: I would not disturb you, but if you knew what I have suffered on your account, it would, I dare believe, give your heart joy to relieve mine."

What rapture did not those precious words convey to me?—Yet I could not articulate what I felt—The various emotions which I experienced, and my weakness together, prevented all utterance: but I caught his hand again, and put it to my forehead, to my lips, merely from a passionate fondness—The heat of my hand made him exclaim,—"Good God? how you burn! Can nothing be done to remove this cruel fever?"

That tender exclamation was of more service to me, than all the prescriptions

of the *college* would have been—I grew better from that moment. I opened my eyes again, fixed them on the dear cause of the misery, both of body and mind, which I had endured, and said, with a feeble voice, "I shall be better soon, my Lord, if you wish for my recovery."

"Wish, for it?" cried he in lively accents; "I wish for nothing but your health and happiness—Have you any doubts—how can you have any doubts concerning my regard for you?"

He spoke those few words with so musical a voice, and with so much earnestness, that I was charmed with them. I thanked him in the best manner I could: but I was not able to make acknowledgements adequate to my wishes.

In a few days, during which my Lord never left me, but when decency required

red his abſence, I was ſurprizingly mended. I began to ſit up.

My Lord carried me at firſt, from my bedſide to the chair, till I was ſtrong enough to walk, and then I leaned upon his friendly arm. Never was any creature more tenderly nurſed, nor was ever any body more grateful. I really felt myſelf quite a new being, to ſee my Lord, when I had concluded, he had left me never to return, redouble his aſſiduities about me; to find myſelf the ſole object of his tenderneſs, at a time when I believed he had entirely given me up for another.—The ſatisfaction which I enjoyed upon the occaſion, almoſt deprived me of my ſenſes. In ſhort, I could not check my raptures, and I doubtleſs ſurprized my lover by the frequent ſallies of my gratitude: yet, tho' I imagined that I had great reaſon to be happy, I could not, now and then, help reflecting upon the

ſcene which had thrown me into the diſ-order, which ſo nearly proved fatal to me, and was at the ſame time, naturally, deſirous of knowing where that lady was whom I had ſeen ſo familiar with my Lord, and whether he had relinquiſhed *her*, as he had, I fancied, abandoned *me*.—" Will he not go back to her again ?" ſaid I to myſelf—Whenever I thought about the lady, and I often thought about her: a train of melancholy ideas crowded into my mind—Sometimes tears forced a paſſage from my eyes, in ſpite of all my endeavours to reſtrain them.

One day, my Lord found me alone in the garden, attempting to dry my eyes before I made my appearance before him. Seizing my hand ere I apprehended his nearneſs to me, he ſaid " What's the matter, my dear Fanny ?

Why

Why do you ſtrive to hide from your ſincereſt friend, a ſorrow which ſtill preys—with the greateſt concern I ſee it—upon your tender ſpirits: a ſorrow which was, I firmly believe, the cauſe of your late illneſs? With what affliction can you be oppreſſed, which may not be communicated to me, your guardian, who will, be aſſured, do every thing in his power to render you happy? Have I not reaſon, Fanny, to complain of your want of confidence in me?"

That little reproach, delivered in the mildeſt manner, ſtruck me to the ſoul, and forced the ſecret from my boſom, which I had reſolved to bury in it for ever, as I was dreadfully afraid of giving the leaſt diſguſt to the man whom I loved to diſtraction.

Immediately thinking that he had been offended at my reſerve, I burſt into tears—"Do not, oh! do not be

angry with me, my Lord," ſaid I.—" I ſhould have opened my heart to you before, had I not been fearful of making you angry."

"Angry, Fanny?" replied he gravely; "How is it poſſible for me to be angry with you? How little do you know me? Speak, therefore, and ſpeak freely, my deareſt girl; I may be ſorry, I may be wretched becauſe it is not in my power to make you happy, but I can never be angry with you,"

Here he ſtopped, waiting for my anſwer.

I bluſhed, trembled, and felt the extreme impropriety of telling him, that I had been diſtracted at his abſence, that I had watched him, that I had, with the ſtrongeſt jealouſy, ſeen him with a lady in his park. Could a girl of the leaſt delicacy, make ſuch a diſcloſure to the man,

man, who had never ſaid, that he loved her, and whoſe rank in life prevented her from expecting honourable addreſſes to him?—I thought, therefore, that I ſhould have expired with ſhame.

I ſat ſilent for ſome time, covered with confuſion—I longed, but I knew not how, to unboſom myſelf.

My Lord, perceiving my embarraſſment, drew out of his pocket the piece of paper on which I had written, with a tremulous hand, a few lines to him, at the time I was taken ſick; of which I often thought afterwards, but was always afraid to enquire about it.—Sometimes, indeed, I hoped that Nanny had either deſtroyed it, or put it up in my writing box.

"This paper," ſaid he, "I found upon your table, the day I ruſhed into your dreſſing-room, on having heard that you

was very much out of order; and I will own that it has given me a great deal of uneasiness. Do you then, really, want to leave me, Fanny? Am I so exceedingly disagreeable to you, that all my endeavours to please cannot prove, in the least degree, successful? Are you, actually, so attached to Seymount, that you think you should behave injuriously with regard to *him*, by remaining any longer under *my* protection?"

He paused, after having, with much difficulty, delivered the above interrogations. I was ready to die with vexation, to think that he should still imagine it possible for me to love any man except himself.—I could not keep silent—I hastily cried out—tho' blushing excessively, at the same time—"How strangely, my Lord, you are still mistaken about me! I never *was* attached to Mr. Seymount,

mount, in the manner you apprehend, never *can* be ſo attached to him —Were I but ſure of your being as indifferent to the *lady*, who leant on your arm in the park, as I am to *him*—"

No ſooner were thoſe words out of my mouth, than I would have almoſt given my life to recall them. I clapped my hands before my eyes—I roſe; and hurried towards the door.

My Lord ſtopped me, and in accents more lively than any I had yet heard, ſaid, "Stay, Fanny, let us, at leaſt, underſtand each other clearly: aſſure me that you do not love Seymount, and you ſhall have no reaſon to have an ill opinion of me: you cannot, certainly, have an ill opinion of me, for my affectionate behaviour to my ſiſter."

A thunder-bolt levelled at my head, could not have confounded me more.—I ſaw, I felt, how extremely ridiculous I had been

been with my jealousy: I was throughly ashamed to think how much I had, precipitately, done to lessen myself in his eyes. I was ashamed to look up to him: again I hurried towards the door—again he caught me in his arms.

"My dearest Fanny," said he, "stay, and suffer me to make both you and myself as easy as I can as present: stay and see the transports with which you have filled my heart, by the involuntary emotions of your own. Sit down and listen to me."

I complied, tho' my heart fluttered in such a manner, that I thought it would burst.

"Be composed, my dearest girl"—continued he, "and hope every thing, by attending to me with patience.—I lost my father, the Earl of Woodford, when I was quite a lad: he left me and a sister,

an

an infant alſo, to the care of the tenderest and beſt of mothers, who gave up all her future expectations in life— being young and handſome— in order to apply herſelf intirely to the education of her children — Thoſe children, in return, endeavoured to behave to her with the greateſt duty and affection: all our affection, and all our duty, ſhe has hitherto deſerved; yet, there are ſituations, ſometimes, in life, which are diſtreſſing to the beſt intentioned people in the world. My mother had, from her childhood, contracted a friendſhip with a lady of her own age and rank, who, afterwards, married a Sir George Bromfield, and had by him a daughter, about two years before my ſiſter was born. —As our mothers were intimate, we were frequently together, and as we grew up, Miſs Bromfield, unfortunately for us both, preferred me to all the young

young people who offered themſelves candidates for her eſteem. The preference which ſhe gave me was a favour to which I never aſpired; but it happens, now and then, that what we ſeek for leaſt, is ſooneſt obtained—She took, indeed, ſuch a fancy to me, that Sir George and Lady Bromfield, in a ſhort time, became deſirous of an alliance between two families already united by the ſtricteſt friendſhip.—This alliance my mother mentioned to me, in a way which plainly diſcovered what joy it would afford her to call her friend's daughter *hers*. In reply, I told her, that I wiſhed I had looked upon Miſs Bromfield in the light in which I had the honour to appear to *her*, but that I felt no particular inclination for her.—I alſo told her, that I ſhould, very cautiouſly, enter into the marriage-ſtate, and that I, by no means, approved of the

the present fashionable mode of matrimony: adding, that as I should make it a point to be constant to my wife, I would, willingly, marry a woman whom I really loved, that I might have no inducement to wander from her.—I concluded with saying, that I had never seen the woman to whom I wished to be indissolubly united, and that I chose to remain unmarried, till I could alter my state without acting in opposition to the motions of my heart.—My mother finding me so averse to Miss Bromfield, said she would no longer press me to marry against my inclination, provided I would promise her never to marry a woman of low birth, however agreeable she might be in every other respect.—Little reflecting upon the nature of such a promise, at that time, I solemnly, most solemnly, assured her, that her request should be faithfully complied with.

Satisfied

Satisfied with that assurance, she ceased to persecute me, and as I was very well contented with what I had done, my heart was perfectly easy.—Perfectly easy was my heart, till the morning Hyam brought me to see *you*. I was instantly, struck with the elegance of your person, and with the enchanting simplicity of your manner; I soon found you were with strangers, and obliged to work for a subsistence. I was exceedingly shocked at the appearance of things, and still more so, when, on the rapid progress of my passion for you, I considered, that my mother would strongly object to the lowness of your station.—Being desirous also of placing you above dependence, I could not help urging you to occupy this small house, which I had, some time before, purchased, on account of the wholsomness of its situation.—You remember, with what firmness

neſs you refuſed my offer: however, I proceeded to furniſh it, and to make it ready for an inhabitant.—Coming one day to ſee you, the woman, with whom you lodged, intercepted me upon the ſtairs, and gave me no little encouragement to hope for her aſſiſtance in carrying on any deſign againſt you.—Her infamous alacrity alarmed me extremely. I thought, indeed, ſo much about your dangerous ſituation, that I had no reſt, when I was abſent from you: and it was *fear*, which hurried me to call upon you the night you were forced away.—Happily, I overtook you; happily, I brought you hither. You cannot but be ſenſible, Fanny, that I never took advantage of the confidence you repoſed in me, but you do not know with what tranſports I gazed on your growing beauties; with what heart-felt

delight

delight I listened to your charming conversation. Your discretion, your modesty, your delicacy—your every female excellence I saw enraptured, and I died with desire, to tell you how extravagantly I doated on you—Yet, certain as I was, at the same time, that my mother would make objections extremely unwelcome to my ears, I was deterred from speaking: I was fearful of increasing *your* disquiet, as well as my own. I fancied also (impelled by vanity, perhaps) that you beheld me in a favourable light, and that nothing but your innate diffidence, your exquisite discreetness, prevented you from discovering your sentiments in my behalf—Nor had I any doubts concerning your partial sentiments, till the evening you imagined you saw Seymount pass us.—Your agitation then filled me with inexpressible anxiety—I

looked

looked upon *him*, as the favoured lover —When I urged you, however, to acquaint me with the cauſe of it, I was ſoon moſt pleaſingly convinced how much I had been miſtaken.—Juſt when I was beginning to feel myſelf truly happy, becauſe intirely perſuaded that my paſſion for you was returned, I was informed by my mother, that ſhe and my ſiſter would come and ſtay with me a few days. At any other juncture, I ſhould have been highly pleaſed with the intended viſit, but ſuch a viſit, when I had flattered myſelf, that I had made the wiſhed-for impreſſion upon you, threatened a ſeparation inconceivably diſagreeable to me: indeed I dreaded it; yet I could not, poſſibly, extricate myſelf from ſo embarraſſing an affair, without creating ſuſpicions which

might

might have proved prejudicial to us both: I, therefore, left you at a time when I would have given the world to have ſtaid with you. I even did not think it proper to ſend or to write to you, leſt the ſervants ſhould chatter amongſt themſelves. I thought it better to wait till my mother left me, tho' I did the greateſt violence to my inclination, by acting in that manner.—My mother, while ſhe ſtaid with me, perpetually launched out in Miſs Bromfield's praiſe, and failed not frequently to tell me, that, as *ſhe* had ſet her heart upon me, a diſappointment would, in all probability, be attended with melancholy, if not fatal conſequences. I affected to laugh off what I heard, and imputed it to the wild fancies of a romantic girl. On the day when your curioſity, your *love*, let me add, unfortunately, led you to come in

ſearch

ſearch of me, Fanny, I was walking in the park with Lady Ann, who declared to me, ſeriouſly, that Miſs Bromfield was actually ſuppoſed to be in a decline, and that her declining health was attributed to her prepoſeſſion for *me*: adding, that ſympathetic feelings alone, on my ſide, would probably ſave her life.—Infinitely as I preferred *you*, to all the women in the world, I was, I own, exceedingly diſtreſſed, to hear that any innocent perſon ſhould have a moment's uneaſineſs on *my* account—The ſolemnity which my ſiſter had thrown into my face, by her diſcloſure, with regard to Miſs Bromfield, only excited her mirth: She rallied me prodigiouſly upon the occaſion, and, with her raillery, mixed a great many diſpleaſing particulars concerning Miſs Bromfield's inclination for me—My ſiſter kept me walking a conſi-

derable

derable time, but little did I think you were ſo near; tho', while I liſtened to details about the tender ſenſations of another woman, my thoughts were entirely fixed on *you*—I wiſhed to know how you did, what were your ſentiments concerning me, how you employed yourſelf during my abſence, and if that abſence was not painful to you—So anxious, indeed, was I before the cloſe of the next day, that I diſpatched John, who had been uſed to attend me hither, with a little note, to enquire after your health, and to let you know how much I longed to ſee you.—What was my aſtoniſhment, what was my concern, when he brought me back the paper unopened, and informed me, that you were in a violent fever, and quite inſenſible!—I forgot, immediately, my mother and ſiſter, and flew hither without bidding them

them farewell. The condition I found you in, almoſt unhinged my reaſon, and I was incapable of leaving you till I ſaw you out of danger; and now my joy on your recovery, and on the partiality which you have diſcovered in my favour, is ſo exceſſive, that I ſhall not be able to ſeparate myſelf from you again.—Yet tell me, Fanny, and tell me truly, what you meant by that letter; tell me why you wanted to deſert me, and why you ſaid you could never make returns for the favours you have received from me—Indeed, my ſweet girl, you never received any favours from me: I pleaſed myſelf, I am ſure, full as much, if not more, than I pleaſed you, by all my trifling endeavours to be ſerviceable to you.—Why then, Fanny, ſhould you think of making me wretched by de-

priving me of the pleasure of seeing you, and conversing with you?"

I had wept almost from the beginning of the above speech; at the conclusion of it, my tears became violent, and I hastened to reply; with a faultering voice, I just was able to say, "Oh my Lord, do not think so unkindly of me; nor believe it possible for me to endure to see you wretched. Freely would I lay down my life to procure *you* felicity."

I could not proceed.

"Be composed, my dear girl," said he, pressing my hands; "do not, at present, think of any thing that can disquiet you. I will ask no more questions now: by and by you will, I am sure you will, remove all my doubts."

They shall be removed directly," answered I—"Jealous of the charming lady,

who

who is, you tell me, your sister, I determined to leave you. Will you pardon, my Lord, a resentment of which I am heartily ashamed? I am thoroughly sensible of my weakness, but I, at the same time, abhor deceit."

"Do not call it weakness, Fanny," replied he, "unless you will allow it to be a most amiable one—When jealousy proceeds from love it is certainly to be forgiven: and you have, by your apprehensions, with regard to my constancy, rendered yourself a thousand times more dear to me than ever. It gives me, however, great pleasure, to think that if you quit my house, you will not be obliged to labour again for a subsistence: for I have secured you three hundred a year."

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed I, quite overwhelmed with love and gra-

titude, "What will become of me?—My good God! Teach me, direct me how to return ſuch generous affection."

"Riſe, my Fanny," ſaid my Lord, tenderly ſtraining me to his boſom, for I had thrown myſelf on my knees—"Riſe: let me dry up thoſe tears; let me aſſure you, that you ſhall never feel another jealous pang on *my* account: I will be yours, and only yours, in the moſt honourable manner,—I only beg for time to prevail on my mother to yield, with ſome ſort of grace, to my wiſhes; you cannot love me leſs for being willing to prove myſelf a good ſon to a mother, who is, in every other reſpect, the kindeſt imaginable: when ſhe becomes acquainted with your excellent diſpoſition, ſhe will I hope as earneſtly deſire an alliance with you, as I do.—Promiſe me, therefore, my deareſt Fanny, to

make

make yourſelf intirely eaſy, and to love me as affectionately as ever.—I will never abuſe your indulgence: I will pay a proper reſpect to your delicacy, and your diſcretion, but I cannot exiſt without your tenderneſs."

Quite overcome, quite ſoftened by ſo delightful a declaration, I promiſed him every thing he could deſire, and he, from that hour, ſeemed to have received new life. He adored me, but he behaved to me like a man of ſenſe and honour; he treated me as a woman who was, every way, his equal, who was, one day, to ſhare his rank and fortune.—As to myſelf, I would not ſay too much, my dear friend, in my own praiſe, but I had ſo very high an opinion of my Lord's underſtanding, and principles, that I almoſt deified him—Frequently did I, after having converſed with him upon different ſubjects,

so strongly feel my own deficiences, that I could not help wondering at his condescension in spending so many hours with me.—Sometimes I fancied, that as he had, from his affectionate regard for me, taken a great deal of pains to raise me above the generality of my sex, he had actually rendered me superior to them. Yet, flattered as I was with my lord's condescending carriage, I always behaved to him with the utmost humility: with a humility, indeed, which often induced him to say, "That my deference to him was carried too far; and that it prevented me from discovering so much tenderness for him as I should have otherwise done;" but I assured him, that his apprehensions were groundless, and that my love for him could not be increased.

For about a fortnight after my recovery, we continued the happiest of people;

ple: Lord Woodford ſcarce beſtowed a thought on his mother, tho' I more than once mentioned my lady to him, and aſked him, "If he would not go and ſee her."

"You want then," ſaid he one day, "to ſend me from you, Fanny?"

"Far from wiſhing to part with you, my Lord, I cannot expreſs the pain I ſhould feel in your abſence; but we cannot be too dutiful, we cannot have too great an affection for deſerving parents."

"Sweet girl! How would my mother doat on you, were ſhe to hear you talk thus! And yet ſhe pays ſo much regard to the ſentiments of a foolish world, that I am afraid not all your uncommon merit, would correct her improper way of thinking, under the influence of falſe pride. Beſides, her ſtrong attachment to the

child of her friend, will, doubtlefs, prompt her to oppofe my wifhes."

At laft, however, I perfuaded my Lord to make her Ladyfhip a vifit: he had determined to fet out the next morning, and to return the following day, when a letter brought to him that very evening, obliged him to take another route—An uncle, by his father's fide, had been fuddenly indifpofed at his houfe in Derbyfhire, and defired to fee him immediately.

My Lord was concerned, and diftreft on the perufal of that letter: he very much efteemed his uncle, and was very unhappy at the thoughts of leaving *me*, for a longer time than he had defigned. But fubmiffion was abfolutely neceffary, and we feparated with mutual regret.

The departure of my Lord threw me into a melancholy, which I could, by no

no means, ſhake off. In vain did I fly from one kind of employment to another; my books, my needle, my pencil, my muſick, and my garden, were equally inſufficient to afford me any ſort of conſolation. As I had loſt my dear companion, every thing ſeemed to remind me the more forcibly of my forlorn ſituation.

On the ſecond day of his departure, I ſat down to the organ, and attempted to while away the time, and to amuſe my mind by playing a favourite ſong of my Lord's. When I was in the middle of that ſong, Tom came and informed me, that a lady deſired to ſpeak with me.

Imagining that my mother had by chance found me out, I was in no ſmall flutter: tho' I ſhould have been rejoyced, indeed, to ſee *her*, had I not been afraid of her attempting to carry me to Sir Thomas.—However, I endeavoured to

compose myself, in order to receive the lady, who came in a hired post-chaise, and, according to Tom's description of her, I was really induced to expect my mother's appearance: but how shall I express the awe with which I was struck, when I beheld a graceful figure between forty and fifty enter the room! She had a very genteel air, and such a dignity in her deportment, that I felt my own littleness in a very mortifying manner: I absolutely shrunk into myself.—My eyes were turned towards every part of the room in a thousand directions, as if dazzled by the majestic object before them.—My arms dropped, and I wished to hide myself in the most obscure part of the house. I was soon roused, however, by the stranger's melodious, yet commanding voice.

"Are *you* Miss Osgood?" said she.

I started

I ſtarted at the queſtion; I ventured to look up, and had the flattering ſatisfaction to ſee a ſoft ſmile in the countenance of the lady who ſpoke to me, in which I had before perceived nothing but ſerioufneſs and ſeverity.—The tranſition was ſo favourable, I thought, that I was encouraged to anſwer her: yet I was embarraſſed.—I could not bring myſelf to utter a falſhood, before a perſon who appeared to be the picture of truth; I, therefore, heſitated a little.

"Is not your name, Oſgood?" ſaid ſhe, again, with an impatience mixed with anxiety.

At length I ſtammered out—"Yes, madam."

"And you are placed in this houſe by Lord Woodford?"

By the manner in which ſhe ſpoke thoſe few words, ſhe galled me extreme-

ly; for she uttered them rather contemptuously.—With more haughtiness than usual, I replied—"Lord Woodford who is my guardian, Madam, and who has a right to direct me, thought proper to place me here."

"Your guardian?" replied she, much agitated; "No, Miss; Lord Woodford is not your guardian, and if he has taken any pains to make you believe he is, he has deceived you; but I rather imagine his design is to impose upon *me*, and that he wishes to conceal the *mistress* under the title of the *ward*. However, that scheme will not answer his purpose; I am very well acquainted with the nature of your connections with Lord Woodford, and I am come to insist upon your breaking them off."

I was exceedingly hurt by the peremptory delivery of the above speech; particularly

ticularly ſo at being ſuſpected to be Lord Woodford's miſtreſs —Such language, and from a ſtranger too, was, I thought very impertinent, not to ſay inſolent.— I replied, therefore, with ſtill more haughtineſs—" I do not underſtand this way of talking, Madam. By what authority do you treat me with ſo grating a familiarity? By what authority do you dictate to me in ſo deſpotic a tone?—You certainly do not know me; if you did, you never would ſuppoſe me capable of being the character you have, too haſtily, mentioned. —My pride is ſhocked, at the injurious imputation—I am, I confeſs, under conſiderable obligations to Lord Woodford: he has protected me with the utmoſt humanity: he is the moſt generous, the moſt amiable of men, and has too high a ſenſe of honour to attempt to ſeduce a poor girl,

girl, whom chance pointed out to him as an object entitled to his compassion."

Towards the latter end of my speech, I was so melted, that I could hardly articulate my words, and at the close of it, burst into tears.

"Lord Woodford is, certainly, a man of honour and generosity," replied the Lady, somewhat softened, "but as I must conclude from the warmth with which you have mentioned him, that you are very much attached to him, at least, pray how long do you think you can hold out against the compassion and liberality of such a man, as Lord Woodford?"

"A question, in which so injurious an insinuation is couched," said I, "requires no answer.—A woman who is determined to be virtuous, will not be seduced by any man in the world; and she who is under the protection of Lord Woodford,

Woodford, need not be under any apprehensions with regard to her character."

"Fine romantic notions," replied she, with a scornful smile; "but you are mistaken—A woman's character is always in danger with the man whom she loves if—"

Provoked at her sarcastical behaviour, I could no longer bear it, but, interrupting her, said with some vehemence; "It is of no consequence to *you*, Madam, whether I am mistaken or not; you are quite a stranger to me, and, therefore, I should be glad to be left to myself."

"Undoubtedly, you will be glad to get rid of me," replied the lady, "but however disagreeable my company may be to you"—added she, with additional dignity, "the mother of Lord

Woodford

Woodford might be treated with a little more ceremony, at least by a girl who owns herself obliged to her son."

No words can describe what I endured at that instant.—My astonishment was excessive—My heart was smote with contrition, and I felt myself the meanest, the most abject of all human beings. I should have been humbled before the mother of the man whom I adored, had I not spoken so very freely before her, but when I reflected upon what I had uttered, my shame and my sorrow were beyond expression. I was shrunk to nothing, overwhelmed with confusion on having degraded myself—tho' unknowingly—in the eyes of the very person whom I most wished to please—I could only expect relief from the humanity of her, who was the dearest relation, the parent of the man on whom my soul doated.

In

In ſo awkward, ſo diſtreſſing a ſituation, what could I have ſaid? I ſaid nothing. I threw myſelf on my knees before her; juſt raiſed my weeping eyes, and then caſting them down on the floor, cried, with uplifting hands, "Pardon me, my Lady, pardon a poor girl, who was ignorant of your rank; and who wiſhes moſt earneſtly to make her conduct approved of by your ladyſhip."

For a moment ſhe viewed me, filled with ſorrow, and in a ſupplicating attitude, without opening her lips, then holding out her hand, ſhe ſaid, with an encouraging complacence in her face, "Riſe, and learn, from this time, to behave reſpectfully to every body, leſt you ſhould be deficient in politeneſs to thoſe who have a right to expect it from you—A forward, familiar carriage, in young people, ſhould be ſpeedily corrected,

but

Here I ſtopped.—My tears flowed ſo faſt, they almoſt blinded me: yet I perceived a glow of ſatisfaction in Lady Woodford's cheeks, occaſioned by my having mentioned his Lordſhip in ſuch favourable terms; a kind of pity alſo, blended with curioſity, appeared in her countenance. "Compoſe yourſelf," ſaid ſhe. "If what you have told me, is to be depended upon, you are to be compaſſionated, but—"

"Indeed, madam," replied I, earneſtly, "I have never been accuſtomed to deceive any body. My mother ſpared no pains in my education.—While ſhe was attentive to my acquiring the faſhionable accompliſhments, ſhe ſtrongly inculcated filial obedience, and urged me early to ſpeak truth upon all occaſions, that ſhe might always rely upon what I ſaid."

Lady

Lady Wooford looked, with her eyes fixed, at me, during the above ſpeech—I had, I plainly ſaw, engaged her attention, and was, therefore, willing to avail myſelf of appearances in my behalf,—but I was ſtill ſo awed by her, that I could not venture to ſay what I longed to articulate. She, at length, relieved me, by aſking me, "how it was poſſible for a mother to behave in the manner I had deſcribed."

I replied, "that I could only relate things as they had happened."

"Sit down," ſaid ſhe—for I had riſen from my ſeat in much diſorder—"and tell me every thing relating to you till you came hither."

I obeyed, and entered upon my little narrative with ſpirit, becauſe I flattered myſelf that I ſhould remove all the ſuſpicions her Ladyſhip had harboured

against me. I related, succinctly, all that had passed concerning me, till the day I became jealous of my Lord; but I chose to conceal the rise and progress of my jealousy for many obvious reasons.

My Lady listened to me with great attention, and complacency: and several transitions were observable in her features, as she was differently affected by several parts of my story.

When I had ceased to speak, she said, with a particular benignity in her countenance, "I thank you, Miss Osgood, for your narrative; I hope I may, I believe I may depend upon your veracity."

"You may indeed, my Lady," said I.

"Tell me then, with the same sincerity and frankness, what plan have you formed for your future subsistence."

I blushed, and assured her that I had never thought of any; that I had only intended

intended to return to my old employment, to my drawing. "I am very sensible, Madam," added I, "that I ought to return to it, but I am exceedingly afraid that it will throw me into dangerous situations."

"Your fears are well founded," replied she; "however, when you come to reflect seriously, you will think your situation here far from being safe."

I started; looked surprized, and plainly told her, "I never had thought in that manner."

"I will venture to give you credit for that declaration," said she; "you think you are perfectly secure under my son's protection but your ignorance is the foundation of your satisfaction—you are totally unacquainted with the nature of these connections, and, therefore, I will now make it clear to you how erroneous your conduct has been.—You have frankly and honestly confessed, that you

love

love my ſon, and you are ſtrongly induced to believe that he loves *you*. Well then; can you ſuppoſe that two ſuch people, in the prime of life, and poſſeſſed of the greateſt ſenſibility, always with each other, and perpetually endeavouring to render themſelves mutually agreeable, will be for ever capable of reſiſting the impulſes of nature and inclination? No, Fanny.—You may imagine what you pleaſe, but a time will come when love—or moſt probably nature—will throw you quite off your guard. The deſire of gratifying the wiſhes of the man for whom you feel a violent affection, will overpower your virtue; or elſe you will flatter yourſelf that it is more meritorious to pleaſe *him*, to whom you have been under ſo many obligations, than to preſerve the purity of your character, by refuſing to make him happy.—But you will, by acting in con-

ſequence

ſequence of ſo falſe a way of thinking, too ſoon be convinced of your indiſcretion, and you will moſt probably, after the ſacrifice of your virtue to your love, ſpend the remainder of your days in all the bitterneſs of repentance. Many good and innocent girls, Fanny, have been undone by their romantic notions about the *tender paſſion*; and in proportion to the abſurdity of their ideas concerning *female honour*, have been their ſubſequent ſufferings."

I liſtened with attention—I was ſtruck with the picture of a girl who might, tho' very virtuouſly diſpoſed, be undone; be ruined even from the purity of her principles: yet I thought, at the ſame time, that I ſhould never be duped out of my honour by mine, becauſe I firmly believed that Lord Woodford would not unfairly avail himſelf of my diſintereſted prepoſſeſſions in his favour.

[illegible] for, and you are strongly indu-
[illegible] believe that he loves you. Well
[illegible] suppose two such
[illegible] in the prime of life, and possess-
[illegible] disposition, always with
[illegible] and perpetually endeavouring
[illegible] to render themselves mutually
[illegible] will be incapable of re-
[illegible] impulses of nature and incli-
[illegible] Nothing—You may imagine
[illegible] a time will come
[illegible] love—or, still probably nature—
[illegible] the prime of your guard.
The [illegible] of gratifying the wishes of the
[illegible] when you feel a violent affec-
[illegible] will [illegible] your virtue; or
[illegible] you will [illegible] that it
[illegible] to
[illegible] you have
[illegible]
[illegible] you
[illegible]

ſequence of ſo falſe a way of think
too ſoon be convinced of your indiſ
tion, and you will moſt probably, a
the ſacrifice of your virtue to your l
ſpend the remainder of your days in
the bitterneſs of repentance. M
good and innocent girls, Fanny, l
been undone by their romantic not
about the *tender paſſion*; and in propor
to the abſurdity of their ideas conc
ing *female honour*, have been their
ſequent ſufferings."

I liſtened with attention—I was ſt
with the picture of a girl who m
tho' very virtuouſly diſpoſed, be
done; b
her p
ſam
ou
f

even from the pur
y ought, a
at I ver be
on ne, bec
ve Wo
u ſelf
d his

—I was in no ſmall agitation, however: I felt extremely embarraſſed—I trembled.

Lady Woodford, ſeeing me touched, proceeded in the following manner: "Every woman ought to ſhudder, to think of the loſs of her virtue. I will not ſuppoſe that you have any deſign to give Lord Woodford an opportunity to triumph over yours; but it is natural for me to imagine, that you may be prompted, in an unguarded moment, by a deſire to increaſe his love for you, to give him improper advantages. — Conſider, therefore, child, that no man can eſteem the woman whom he keeps as a miſtreſs, tho' he may appear to have an affection for her; and that love, without eſteem, cannot be of a long duration."

I heard her attentively, and I was convinced: but how to give up the ſociety of a man ſo extremely amiable, ſo deſervedly

deservedly dear to me! that difficulty still remained.—However, I assented to all that Lady Woodford said to me.

"Well, then, child," replied she, "what steps do you intend to take?—You are in the greatest danger *here:* you own, yourself, that you should be exposed to many ineligible trials by returning to your old employment—I have thought of a scheme to save you from any hazardous situations. You are very young, Fanny, you have an attractive person, a good understanding, and, I am willing to hope, an honest, sincere heart: these, it must be confessed, are considerable qualifications, but you, certainly, have sense enough to know, that you are not a proper match for Lord Woodford."

"I am very sensible of the truth of what you say, madam," replied I, with the

humbleſt tone—" I never dared to encourage ſuch an aſpiring idea."

" You will candidly allow," anſwered ſhe, " that the prodigious diſproportion between you, with regard to birth and fortune, is ſufficient to prevent an union; but there are ſeveral reaſons to be urged againſt it. Yet as I perceive a great deal of merit in you, and as I think your caſe particularly affecting, I am inclined to take you under *my* protection. I will place you with a very intimate friend of mine; I will furniſh you with money enough to make a genteel appearance: in time, if you continue deſerving of encouragement, you may be ſettled more to your ſatisfaction: but you muſt promiſe me, previouſly, never to ſee my ſon."

I did not exceedingly like the firſt propoſal, tho' it was a very generous one, and advantageous: when my promiſe

was demanded; with regard to Lord Woodford, I changed colour; my heart throbbed; I thought I ſhould have fainted. At laſt, a ſhower of tears relieved me. I ſobbed aloud—I was almoſt diſtracted at the thoughts of never ſeeing Lord Woodford. My Lady remained ſilent for ſome minutes, till ſhe ſaw my grief beginning to ſubſide; ſhe then, with a voice full of mildneſs and compaſſion, ſaid; "You love my ſon, Miſs Oſgood."

"More than my life"—Thoſe were the words I immediately uttered, with eagerneſs, tho' I could not, without difficulty, articulate them.

Availing herſelf of my words, ſhe replied, with equal eargerneſs, "As you love him ſo ſincerely, you will, certainly, be deſirous of doing every thing to make him happy."

"Undoubtedly," said I, still sobbing.

"Well then—you can only ensure his future felicity, by never seeing him again. This prohibition may shock you just now, but you will, hereafter, be convinced of the propriety of it. Absence is the only cure for an ill-placed inclination: You cannot think, seriously, of being married to Lord Woodford: the disproportion between you, I repeat it, is too considerable to be obviated: privately as you have been brought up, you can have no idea of the disagreeable consequences with which an alliance between you would, most probably, be attended: but supposing all these obstacles to be removeable, my son has been long engaged to make his addresses to an amiable young lady, every way suitable to him, who is actually at this time in an ill state of health, because she

she is neglected by him: consider, therefore, what an injury you will do to Lord Woodford, by taking any measures to keep up a connection with him, tho' in the most honourable manner: by so doing, you will not only hinder him from settling himself very desirably, in every shape, you will also be accessary to the death of a valuable young person, who has been trained up to look upon *him* as the man destined for her husband. She never entertained an irregular, a romantic passion for him, but in conformity to the wishes of her relations, studied to render herself worthy of the man, whom *they* recommended to her choice: Now as I well knew the risques which young women, especially women of family, ran by a brilliant marriage, as rank and fortune give young men of fashion so many opportunities to gratify their capricious

fancies, I took particular care to endeavour to make my ſon ſenſible of the treaſure he would poſſeſs in a good wife; and, at the ſame time, tried to convince him how very injurious to that wife, his conduct would be if he only *neglected* her. Happily, I found Lord Woodford, as he advanced to years of maturity, paid due reſpect to my admonitions, and diſcovered affectionate attentions, which cannot but be highly in his favour, whenever he enters into the marriage ſtate. The young lady, therefore, who has, with the approbation of thoſe who have a right to diſpoſe of her, preferred *him*, ought to be preferred *by* him to all her ſex: how cruelly will he behave, if he refuſes her! and how much unmerited affliction ſhall I occaſion to a family with whom I have lived, from the firſt commencement of our acquaintance, in the

ſtricteſt

ſtricteſt friendſhip! a few reflections on your own, and on Lord Woodford's ſituation, muſt render the extreme impropriety of your continuing to encourage Lord Woodford's viſits unqueſtionable.—By a little conſideration, you will alſo be aware of the fatal conſequences neceſſarily to be apprehended from his partiality in your behalf.—Let me, then, prevail on you, to give up all thoughts of my ſon, my dear Fanny: let me have reaſon, from your compliance with my wiſhes, to call you ſo, and to eſteem you more and more every day: give me your word, that you will make no attempts to ſee Lord Woodford, that you will not correſpond with him, that you will oppoſe all the ſteps he may take either to write to you, or to converſe with you."

I ſat almoſt ſtupified with grief while my

my lady was ſpeaking, and when ſhe ſtopped, felt myſelf abſolutely incapable of making any reply.

She looked at me, for a few moments, and ſeemed to pity me exceedingly. Then, riſing, ſaid, "Come, Miſs Oſgood, ſtrive to conquer this weakneſs—I cannot give it a harſher name—Have recourſe to your reaſon, and ſuffer me to convey you immediately to this friend I have mentioned, who will treat you with as much affection and deference as if you were related to me."

I ſighed, but I could not ſpeak.

Advancing towards me, ſhe ſaid, taking me by the hand, "Come, Fanny, ſummon up a little reſolution.—The carriage, which brought me, is at the door; we will ring the bell, and order your maid to ſend your cloaths after you."

I ſtarted: I ſhrunk from her touch—

"What,

"What, leave Lord Woodford," cried I, "without letting him know my design; without writing to him, without preparing him, in the least, for my departure? No—'Tis impossible. Leave *him* who has done so much for me?—my deliverer?—my protector?—my friend? It must not—cannot be."

"It must, indeed," answered my lady. "If you have the least spark of gratitude, if you in any degree attempt to return the friendship he has discovered for you, fly from him immediately; give him not the pain of bidding you farewell."

"O, Madam," replied I, half breathless, so violently was I agitated; "If he loves me, will he not suffer, cruelly suffer, if I leave him in so clandestine a manner?—I can never consent to it.—I am dying at the thoughts of it."

"Think

"Think no more about it," ſaid ſhe, "but act at once: imagination, upon theſe occaſions, generally affects us too much; I am, therefore, the more unwilling to have you leave any note or letter for my ſon: he will only brood over it, and doubly regret your departure."

In vain I oppoſed this obſtinacy, as I thought it, in Lady Woodford; in vain I begged, and intreated her to ſtay till I had juſt told him that I was going with his mother. She would not permit me: ſhe would not hear me.—Overpowered, at laſt, by her plauſible arguments, and flattering promiſes, I ſuffered myſelf to be led to the chaiſe.

As ſoon as I found that the horſes went at a prodigious rate, I could not reſtrain my agonies—I was almoſt frantic to ſee myſelf carried farther and farther, from the man whom I ſo fondly loved; whom

whom I ſo highly valued. I ſcreamed; I abſolutely frighted Lady Woodford, who caught hold of me, and earneſtly conjured me to compoſe myſelf.

"Compoſe myſelf, madam?"—cried I—"Can I poſſibly compoſe myſelf, when I am torn, for ever, from the moſt amiable of men?—Oh madam! I cannot leave him—'tis impoſſible."

"Huſh, huſh, child," replied ſhe, preſſing me to her boſom, with looks in which terror and pity, alternately, appeared—"Don't alarm yourſelf—You make me feel for my ſon."

"Oh! Madam," anſwered I, weeping, "*you*, even *you*, who are his mother, cannot feel for him more than I do."

With great difficulty, ſhe, at length, prevailed on me to be calm—I felt myſelf, indeed, almoſt lifeleſs from fatigue: I ſat like a perſon deprived of ſenſe, without

without motion: I ſighed violently.—Every now and then, my lady took hold of my hand, and aſked me "how I did," ſpeaking very kindly, tho' ſhe received no anſwers from me.

At laſt we arrived in London.—The ſtreets were crowded, but the people I beheld, did not, in the leaſt, engage my attention. There was but *one* perſon in the world whom I wiſhed to ſee, and I had no hopes of ever ſeeing *him* again.—Dreadfully painful were my emotions, when I reflected upon my hopeleſs ſituation.

When we ſtopped at Mrs. Stevens's, the lady with whom I was to live, they were obliged to carry me out of the chaiſe; I trembled ſo much, that I could ſcarce ſet my feet to the ground.

I was led into a parlour, in which a very agreeable middle-aged woman received

ceived me, with great complacency in her countenance, and that complacency ſeemed to increaſe, on her finding me really diſtreſſed. She, immediately, endeavoured to alleviate my ſorrow by a gentleneſs of manners, and a ſoothing behaviour, to which I could not, tho' deeply afflicted, be inattentive.—Perceiving that I was almoſt ſuffocated by my grief, ſhe placed me in an elbow chair, called for a glaſs of wine and water with a few drops, and, in very affectionate accents, preſſed me to ſwallow a little, telling me, it would relieve me extremely.

Lady Woodford, with great good nature, joined in her requeſt: I therefore complied, and found momentary eaſe.—My ſorrow was not abated, but I ſtrove to keep it down as much as poſſible, while her Ladyſhip ſtayed.

When ſhe roſe up to go, ſhe took me by

by the hand, and intreated me to try to baniſh all diſquieting ideas, aſſuring me, at the ſame time, that ſhe would be my friend. She then aſked me, ſoftly, if I wanted any money.

I replied in the negative. I ſighed to think that Lord Woodford had amply ſupplied all my wants, and that I was to be ſeparated from him for ever. Burſting into tears, I exclaimed, "Oh my God! what do I ſuffer! and what miſery will not the moſt generous of men endure, when he hears that I have quitted him ſo abruptly!"

Lady Woodford hurried away as ſoon as I had uttered thoſe words—She was exceedingly affected by them.

THE END OF VOL. I.